FEBRUARY 1954

# COMMENTARY


Unions and the Public Interest — A. H. RASKIN

The Two Cradles of Jewish Liberty — CECIL ROTH

The Quest for the Grand Moral Synthesis — ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

The Wretched Little Demon That Was Hitler — HERBERT LUETHY

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Cedars of Lebanon
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On the Horizon
A Visit from Royalty — DAN JACOBSON

The Study of Man
Pagan Ideas and the Jewish Mind — THEODOR H. GASTER

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Milton Himmelfarb — Jacob B. Agus — William S. Poster

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# COMMENTARY

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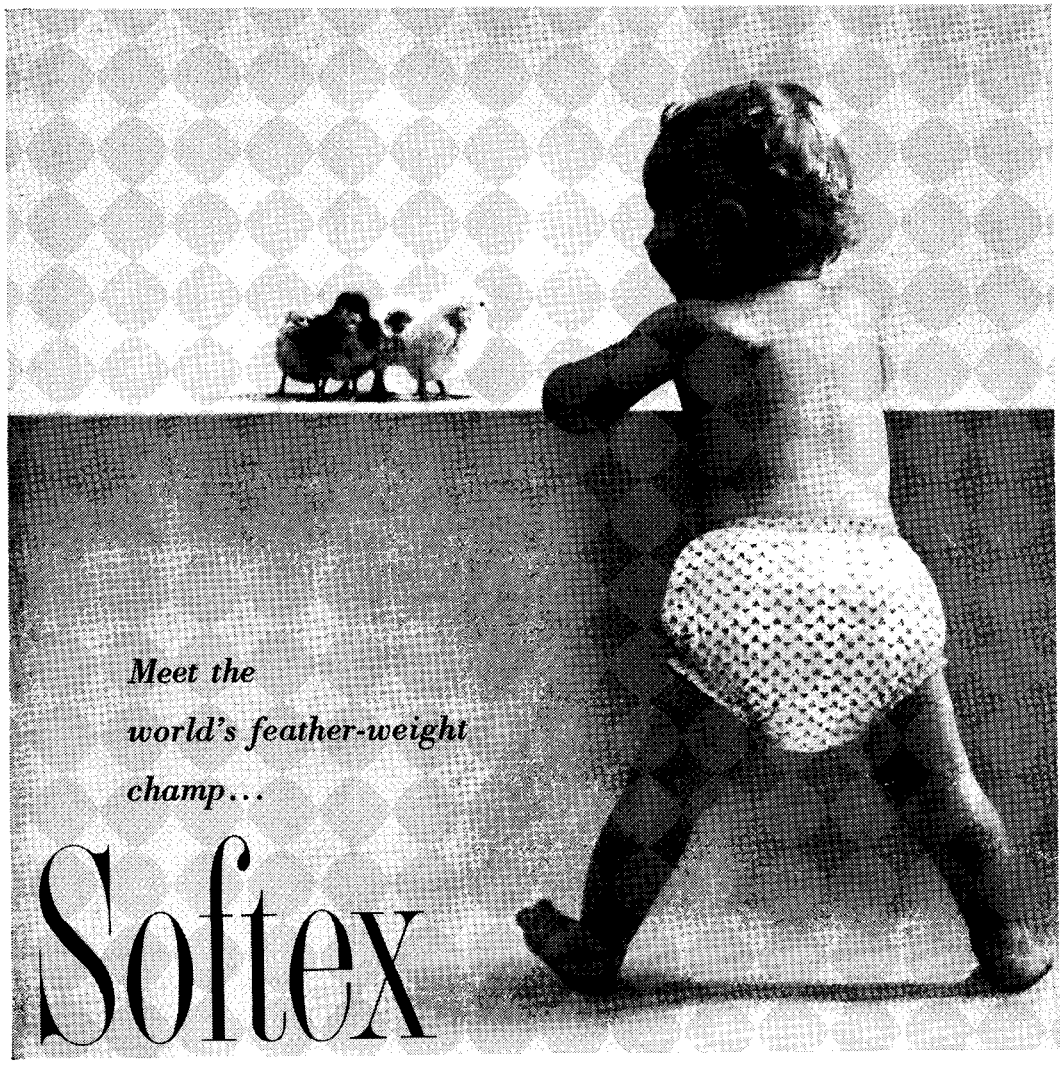


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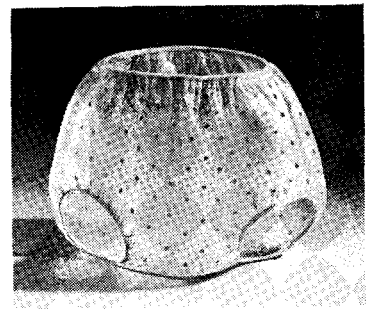

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

# COMMENTARY

**Can Eisenhower Control a Downturn?** *A. H. Raskin*

The American government now has numerous powers designed to make it possible to counteract an economic slump. But would the political contradictions within the Republican party prevent it from taking decisive action? A leading journalist registers his concern.

**Us New Suburban Jews** *Harry Gersh*

Mr. Gersh finds himself, with some millions of other Americans, established in a little house in a nice little suburb, worrying about crab grass, not unheard at PTA meetings, even doing his part in the Temple, and – to his surprise – feeling no pain.

**Appeasement's New Look** *Peter Meyer*

In certain influential quarters it is now being urged that the West make a "realistic settlement" – or "deal," as Theodore L. White calls it in his *Fire in the Ashes* – with the Soviet powers, and eschew even the hint of a "crusading," "moralistic" foreign policy. Mr. Meyer scrutinizes these new tendencies, as evidenced in Mr. White's book and elsewhere, and the preconceptions they arise from.

**Will Israeli Youth Reject Judaism?** *Robert L. Lindsey*

A Protestant clergyman, who has spent many years in Jerusalem and is returning there, adds his own comment on the startling new tendency in Israel earlier discussed by Ernst Simon in these pages. How seriously must we take the movement among young Israelis to abandon their identification with historic Judaism for the sake of a multi-national democracy?

**Italy Between Right and Left** *Bogdan Raditsa*

Italy, like her sister country, France, may soon take the "popular front" road, which would represent a smashing Communist victory over Western democracy. A practiced observer of politics, Mr. Raditsa, just returned from a long visit to Italy, analyzes the continuing failure of democratic forces there.

**Success and Faith** *William Phillips*

The growing concern in many quarters of our society with religious and moral absolutes, combined with the American emphasis on democratic expression, has produced, among other things, a volume called *This I Believe* (growing out of the radio program of the same name), in which a hundred Americans present their personal "faiths." Mr. Phillips makes an assessment of the values offered.

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# COMMENTARY

## UNIONS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

### *The Degeneration of Collective Bargaining*

**A. H. RASKIN**

TWENTY-ONE years have gone by since the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act gave unions an affirmative legal base on which to build their membership and economic strength. This, then, should be the year in which American labor comes of age, and a good time to take stock of the extent to which unions have grown up.

If the measure is size, unions have certainly reached man's estate. The biggest of big businesses is puny alongside the biggest union. Such giants as Walter P. Reuther's United Automobile Workers, David J. McDonald's United Steelworkers, or Dave Beck's International Brotherhood of Teamsters are twice the size of the colossus of American industry—the American Telephone and Telegraph Co., with 700,000 employees.

If wealth is the test, unions need not take a back seat to our best-heeled financial institutions. Labor organizations that were so broke they had to withhold stenographers' pay and scrounge a few dollars from the banks to pay their electric bills in the early months of the New Deal now have millions of dollars in their treasuries and many times that much in pension and welfare reserves.

If power to shut down major industries becomes the yardstick, unions have demonstrated their effectiveness so often and so completely that few employers attempt to carry out or even encourage a back-to-work movement when a strike is called. Strikes in coal, steel, and automobiles evoke so little company resistance that the unions often neglect to post pickets in places where men once died in battles for union recognition.

But if our focus is on dedication to the public welfare or on the maintenance of high standards of probity in the conduct of their affairs, the union record is full of disquieting passages. Too many unions are in a "robber baron" phase as devoid of social concern as the most sordid chapters in corporate development around the turn of the cen-

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TODAY labor unions are big business. And some of them show an increasing tendency, as A. H. RASKIN here points out, to behave like businessmen of the "robber baron" era, with attitudes to the public often startlingly resembling some of the worst manifestations of that free-wheeling period. From his intimate knowledge of how collective bargaining is increasingly carried on by union and industry—a knowledge gained in covering most of the major labor-management conflicts, "negotiations," and settlements of recent years—he traces out a dominating pattern, which he believes has in it the seeds of a transformation ominous not only for the future of labor, but for our whole society. Mr. Raskin is the nationally known labor reporter for the New York *Times*. During World War II, as a lieutenant-colonel, he was chief of the labor branch of the army's Industrial Services Division, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.



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tury, when "the public be damned," and "all that the traffic will bear," were the ruling slogans.

Racketeers have made their way into control of unions from New York to Los Angeles on a scale unparalleled since the repeal of Prohibition sent unemployed hoodlums scurrying into union ranks. Some locals have been turned into instruments of extortion; in others the underworld rulers have been content to loot the union welfare fund through kickbacks and exorbitant fees for non-existent services.

Fixers and "influence peddlers" have set themselves up as merchants of labor peace. Even where there is no gang penetration, many employers have come to the conclusion that they need a high-priced consultant with strong union and political ties to float a harmonious solution of their contract problems. Their function is very much the same as that of the "5 per centers" on whom manufacturers depended to get them government arms contracts.

The idealism that animated many veteran unionists in the days when each union advance was dearly bought is surrendering to the ethics of the market place at the lowest levels. The line between union chief and employer has become so shadowy in many industries that more and more leaders find it possible to run a union and a business at the same time. The fact that they have to write contracts with themselves presents no problem, even without the use of mirrors.

This ability to sit comfortably at both sides of the bargaining table without any feelings of ambivalence is in many ways the most disturbing of all union manifestations —worse in its implications than the seizure of union power by crooks, the atrophy of democratic process in many unions, the exaltation of one-man rule, and the increasing tendency to treat union members as the inviolable possession of the union that happened to organize them.

For it reflects, in microcosm, the ominous possibility that our great power aggregations of labor and industry are moving in the direction of collusive arrangements, based on the theory that they exist to make the most advantageous possible deals for themselves, regardless of the effects of such deals on the consumer. The only restraint on such wage and price cabals would be the danger that costs would be pushed so high that people would cease to buy, thus wiping out profits for the employer and jobs for the union's members. Within that outer limit, the consumer would have no protection at all.

In a period when public attention is preoccupied with finding ways to reduce the economic waste caused by strikes and other expressions of labor-management conflict, it is hard to get anyone to worry very much about the possibility that our chief future problem may become the development of a cartelized economy based on excessively cordial relationships between Big Labor and Big Industry.

It is especially paradoxical to have to be concerned about too much labor peace at a time when an expected economic downturn seems to be opening the way for bitter new industrial and political battles. Labor's campaign for a guaranteed annual wage in the mass-production industries will run into the stiffest kind of employer resistance, even though what the unions are asking is not really a wage guarantee but simply a fund to supplement state unemployment insurance payments. If labor decides to make 1954 the year for a showdown on this issue, strikes in steel or electrical manufacturing are almost certain.

Congress is likely to duck any choosing up of sides on the vexing question of Taft-Hartley amendments, but it may find itself caught in a labor-industry crossfire on what to do to shore up the economy if unemployment gets worse. But these battles, costly or politically embarrassing as they may prove, are unlikely to thwart, over the long pull, the drawing together of our great economic power-centers of industry and labor into mutually dependent relations that contain within them the seeds of collusion against the public welfare. The big question

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for the future is whether we will move out of labor-industry conflict into something even more destructive of democratic values than all the losses engendered by industry-wide tie-ups today.

THE rise of union racketeering provides a very immediate warning of the danger that cooperation between unions and employers may take forms which are as criminal as they are corrupt. Far from being the foe of the businessman, the union racketeer is often his creature. Indeed, the racketeer is himself a businessman, an exponent of the free enterprise system at its worst.

His aim is to make every dollar he can out of his business, the union, and in the process he switches from service to the union membership to service to the employers with whom he deals. If he is really smart, however, he finds it possible to achieve both objectives.

The successful union crook is the one who can line his own pockets and improve the standards of the membership at the same time. This is not as hard as it sounds. By forming an alliance with a particular set of employers, the racketeer is able to use his control over the labor force as a weapon for hounding competitors out of business. The favored companies get strike insurance; those outside the syndicate get strikes until they knuckle under. The end result is a "stabilized" situation in which the employer members of the partnership are able to fix prices without effective restraint and the union writes its own ticket on wages and welfare protection. Both are the gainers. The loser is the public; the gains of both come out of the consumers' pockets.

THE New York City Anti-Crime Committee, under the chairmanship of Spruille Braden, the former Assistant Secretary of State, has made a fascinating study of the circumstances surrounding the formation of a trucking union to haul garbage from stores, restaurants, and other business establishments in the metropolitan area.

The committee's investigation provided strong evidence that the union's principal aim in life was to steer all the garbage business to one company—a company headed by an old buddy of Frank Costello. The union actively campaigned in behalf of the company and called strikes against those who balked at letting it haul their refuse. Complaints that its rates were too high got no more sympathy from the union than they did from the company. The whole set-up is under investigation by the Anti-Trust Division of the Justice Department, but the reluctance of businessmen to testify in such cases has made it difficult to round up support for an indictment.

The sordid story of employer collaboration in the degradation of the International Longshoremen's Association is spread on the record of the New York State Crime Commission for all to read. It was a story a quarter-century in the making and it wound up in the transformation of what had been a union into an amalgamation of gangs so powerful that the insurance companies and the police joined with the shipping lines and the stevedores in acknowledging and confirming their supremacy.

The ILA was a Frankenstein monster of the employers' own fabrication. They subverted the union over the years; they kept its president, Joseph P. Ryan, in automobiles and expensive clothes, right down to the pajamas he wore to bed at night; they subsidized the hooligans Ryan recruited from Sing Sing to hold the rank and file in subjection. The imported gangsters set up satrapies of their own within the union and battled among themselves for control of the international organization; the membership lost its docility as the abuses of the high command became increasingly flagrant. But at no time, even when its investments in "harmonious labor relations" ceased to pay any dividends, did the shipping industry undertake any discernible role of leadership in the campaign to dislodge the ILA from its dominant position on the piers. On the contrary, the employers took sanctuary in the pious defense that the law required them to be "neutral" in union affairs.

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By the time the American Federation of Labor kicked it out, ILA was an anachronism in union corruption. The more up-to-date operators in the field of union administration as a road to riches are a good deal slicker than Joe Ryan and his confederates. Take the late Thomas F. Lewis, slain union boss of the Yonkers Raceway, and Joseph J. Delaney, who succeeded to the vice-presidency of the AFL Operating Engineers after Joe Fay went to jail for shaking down building contractors.

Lewis, an enterprising fellow, was quick to grasp the potentialities of union welfare funds as a source of personal income. Through his wife, he became a partner in an insurance agency into which he funneled all the money paid by employers to provide hospitalization, life insurance, and other forms of welfare protection for the 5,000 apartment house, country club, and race track workers who belonged to the Lewis union. More than one-quarter of all the money stayed with the agency—a total take for Lewis and his associates in a five-year period of $412,634. The employers, who theoretically exercised joint trusteeship over the funds, took the view that it was really the workers' money and there was no reason for them to antagonize Lewis by quibbling about how it was spent.

Joe Delaney shared in the Lewis swag. He was listed in the agency's records as a consultant, but a diligent effort by investigators for the State Insurance Department failed to produce any record of his ever having been consulted about anything. The closest thing to consultation Delaney could recall was that Lewis once had asked him, "Joe, what's new?" Delaney never came to the agency's office, but his services were considered so valuable that he got a raise in pay halfway through his fourteen months of consultation. At the start he and his union aide, Richard Nolan, were struggling along on a combined salary of $350 a week, but later this was pushed up to $400. This did not, of course, take into account what Delaney and Nolan were drawing in salary and expenses for their regular duties as officers of the International Union of Operating Engineers.

The fact that Delaney's own union and a number of others in which his influence was strong placed their welfare business with the Lewis agency might just possibly have had something to do with the money he was paid. Delaney has been a lavish liver for many years. He has a home in the exclusive Fieldston section of the Bronx and another in fashionable Westport, Connecticut; he owns two big cars and he spends about half the year at the race track. Once he showed a friend a $10,000 check he had received at a testimonial dinner given in his honor by one of his union locals. He was properly indignant when asked why he had not taken the money in cash: "I don't do things that way."

Another union officer with a highly developed business sense is James R. Hoffa, kingpin of the AFL Teamsters Union in the Midwest states. Hoffa is an engaging sort of roughneck, idealized by the truck drivers he leads. When he proposed last year that he be permitted to buy a secondhand Beechcraft plane to hop around his territory in, his members were outraged at the idea that he be allowed to risk his neck in such fashion. They voted to buy him a new Douglas DC-3 instead. He turned down the offer.

But the members got an insight into another phase of the Hoffa character when a Congressional investigating committee got to work on him a couple of months ago. The testimony the probers turned up indicated that Hoffa was in more businesses than the House of Morgan. His basic union pay comes to $21,000 a year, but one investigator estimated that his total annual income from all his enterprises was almost ten times that.

Hoffa's business interests ranged from a share in a Flint brewery and a Columbus harness racing track to boys' and girls' vacation camps in Wisconsin. The most piquant testimony related to the formation by Hoffa and Bert Brennan, another union official, of a car haulaway agency that paid their wives $65,000 in dividends in less than three years. They set up the agency and got a prized contract to transport cars for Gen-

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eral Motors after they had forced settlement of a strike by nine independent haulaway truck operators in 1948. One of the strikers testified that Hoffa had "jumped down our throats" to get the strike called off.

The new agency had only one employee. He had the title of vice-president and general manager, and he told the Congressional committee that the 100 shares of ownership stock were divided equally between the two wives. They set up in business by buying ten trucks from the company that had been on strike, at a cost of $20,000, and then proceeding to rent them back to the company at a rental of $70,000 for the year. The hearings drew a blank on efforts to find out what happened to $100,000 in checks endorsed by the insurance agent to whom Hoffa's union had given its welfare business. The investigators made no secret of their belief that the checks represented kickbacks to union officials, but no one would admit it. The fact that the insurance agent was the son of a Chicago AFL unionist with powerful racket associations did nothing to dispel the probers' suspicions. Neither did the fact that the company that wrote the welfare insurance had won out over rival bidders with a much lower retention rate.

For those who regard an honest trade union movement as essential to the maintenance of any kind of idealism in a democratic society, it is heartening to note the disquiet with which the leadership of all major unions views the spread of corruption in union ranks. George Meany and the AFL Executive Council have tossed into the ashcan the seventy-year-old concept that an AFL charter gave the officers of each international a license to do exactly what they pleased without any interference from the parent body.

In expelling the International Longshoremen's Association, the Federation made itself the custodian of the good name of all its affiliates. How aggressively it will follow through on this policy in the Operating Engineers and other polluted unions remains to be seen, but the will to clean house is strong among some of those who only a year ago were staunch supporters of the hands-off doctrine of union autonomy.

The mass-production unions in the Congress of Industrial Organizations have been far less vulnerable to the incursions of racketeers than the AFL unions that have the bulk of their strength in construction, trucking, entertainment, food, and other industries with local organization and a multiplicity of small, competing employers.

But there are indications that the shooting of Walter P. Reuther, president of both the CIO and the United Automobile Workers, was engineered by racketeers bent on seizing control of the auto union. What is more, there is reason to suppose that the would-be assassins had links with union-busting employers in the auto industry. These employers apparently proceeded on the theory that their businesses would do better with a complaisant union than with no union at all. Other CIO unions have had less spectacular experiences with attempts at racket penetration, and in several unpublicized instances minor union leaders have been removed for getting too chummy with management.

Without minimizing the extent of union racketeering that remains, it is fair to point out that the men at the head of organized labor have demonstrated a greater disposition to do something about uprooting it than the employers who have had contact with union crooks. Industry has had a great deal to say, in the broad sense, about labor racketeering, just as it had a great deal to say about Communism in trade unions in the days when a sizeable chunk of the CIO was under Communist rule. But when it comes to assisting the authorities in prosecuting union racketeers, employers are just as loath to come forward as they were to stand up against Communists in the unions.

It is not simply a matter of fear. Over and over again I have heard employers say about some notorious union freebooter: "I never knew him to go back on his word," or, "We always got along fine with him," or, "All he wanted was to make a buck, what's so

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wrong about that?" Among those who have been most sedulous in petitioning the State Parole Board to let Joe Fay out of jail are the very employers whom he shook down. They say they never met anyone more interested in promoting labor peace.

THAT brings us back to what seems to me the pivotal problem, and the one the AFL and CIO appear to have overlooked entirely in their approach to union racketeering. The real significance of the racketeer is not that he is a crook, but that he is a pathological expression of the kind of labor-management cooperation toward which industrial relations are headed.

The most universally applauded precept of labor statesmanship is the notion that the welfare of the worker is inextricably bound up with the welfare of the industry in which he works. Hand in hand with this goes the concept that one cannot prosper unless the other prospers. If the identity of interest is so complete, what is wrong with the head of a union running a business? Why shouldn't the president of the Bakery Union operate a bakery, or the president of the Teamsters Union own a fleet of trucks? How else can a union leader understand what is good for the industry that gives his members their livelihood?

A lot of local union officers, who would be irate at the suggestion that they are betraying their members, do find it in their conscience to function as silent partners in companies that operate under union contracts they help to write. Their number may be microscopic when considered against the 30,000 or so paid officials who work for unions in this country, but the fact that there are any indicates the direction in which we are going.

There are two main reasons for believing that labor and management will grow closer and closer together, with adverse results that may outweigh the gains resulting from a sharp reduction in strikes. One is that the precipitous growth in the size, wealth, and power of unions, coupled with the postwar emphasis on industry-wide and even economy-wide wage patterns, has inevitably made unions more bureaucratic, their leadership more self-contained, their contact with the rank and file more remote. Unions are big business and the problems of bigness tend to make their leaders think of themselves as administrators in much the same way that the officialdom of AT&T or General Motors envisages itself in its relations to its hundreds of thousands of stockholders.

In a sense, it is outdated to talk of labor-management negotiations. It is more accurate to talk of negotiations between the management of labor and the management of industry. They negotiate on mutual problems and each seeks to emerge with an agreement that will serve the interests of his group. But, if both start with the premise that neither can succeed without the help and prosperity of the other, then the negotiations cease to be a duel and become a joint search for a formula that will make each group of administrators look good in the eyes of its principals—in one case, the union rank and file, and in the other, the owners.

A YEAR ago, with a businessman's government come to power in Washington, many observers feared that industry would unleash an all-out attack on unions. It took only a few months to make plain that the ideas of the real pattern-setters in industry ran to more cooperation, not less. General Motors took Walter Reuther off an uncomfortable spot by voluntarily improving the wage and pension provisions of a contract that still had two years to run. United States Steel gave Philip Murray's successor, David McDonald, a handsome first contract and thus spared him the unpleasant necessity of starting his career with a strike. In both cases the union gains were investments in good will on the part of the companies.

These settlements evoked widespread and merited public approval. They provided improved economic standards for the union members, strengthened the unions, and enhanced both the prestige and security of the union leaders. The employers, for their part, were entitled to expect that their generosity

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would bear fruit in more cordial shop relations, increased productivity, and a greater assumption of responsibility by the union leadership for combating wildcat stoppages and other breaches of plant discipline. No one quarrels with these objectives; they are all thoroughly desirable. They become harmful only when the managers of labor and industry grow so eager to give one another a hand up that the public finds itself mashed under the rock-crusher of uninhibited cartels.

This brings up the second danger point in union structure. It is the cross pull engendered by the union's dual role as guardian of the worker's interest as consumer and also as wage-earner. After all, the vast bulk of consumers are themselves workers. As the mainstay of the consuming public, the worker is concerned with keeping the general level of prices down and thus maintaining or increasing the purchasing power of his pay envelope. As a wage-earner in a particular industry, however, the worker's concern runs in the opposite direction. He is perfectly willing to have his employer raise prices if that will make it easier for the worker to get more pay.

The result is that unions have cheerfully accepted the onus for price increases that go far beyond the amount necessary to cover the agreed-upon improvements in labor costs. Michael J. Quill and his Transport Workers Union carry the ball on higher subway and bus fares. The Utility Workers Union sends representatives to the Public Service Commission to warn against setting electric rates so low there will be no margin left for wage rises. The Building Service Employees Union lobbies for the abolition of rent controls as a means of providing more money for landlords and janitors alike. The national CIO has an "understanding" with its telephone union, the Communications Workers of America, under which CIO central bodies are barred from opposing higher telephone charges unless they get a green light from the Bell System union.

In the recent New York milk strike, the milk distributors were obliged to constitute themselves the public's shield against an attempt by the Milk Wagon Drivers Union to wipe out the three-cent-a-quart differential between the price of store- and home-delivered milk and thus make store sales uneconomic. The strike ended in a general rise in milk prices, but the dealers held out against the union's make-work scheme for encouraging home deliveries by a disproportionate boost in store cost.

The list of situations in which unions have allowed themselves to be used as whipping boys for price increases could be extended indefinitely. Indeed, in the days of wage and price regulations, the stabilization agencies grew accustomed to union pleas for above-ceiling price hikes and employer petitions for above-ceiling wage jumps. Now that economic controls are ended, this kind of back-scratching can go on without exposure to embarrassing publicity.

UNION cooperation in such endeavors does not reflect any deliberate desire to hurt the consumer. On the contrary, the leaders of organized labor are quite sincere when they say, in the words of Walter Reuther, that unions must go forward with the community and not at the expense of the community. Or when they paraphrase Charles E. Wilson's unhappy remark about General Motors and say: "What is good for America is good for labor." Unions, in their capacity as spokesmen for a broad segment of the consuming public, use their limited legislative influence to push programs for expanded social security, housing, education, and a general strengthening of the economy in the interest of all Americans.* And they have been

*When it comes to public policy affecting their own narrow interests, however, unions have shown less concern with the general welfare. Individual unions line up with their employers in support of tariff bills intended to restrict foreign competition in their industries, even though the general labor policy endorses removal of trade barriers. The same tendency to put selfish interest first reflects itself in the approach of most unions to legislation having to do with their own industries—e.g., the opposition of utility unions to the extension of public power, the insistence of maritime unions on shipping in American vessels, the hostility of railroad unions to laws benefiting trucking, etc.

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a chief mainstay on the international scene in firming up American foreign policy in defense of our free society against the Communist aggressor.

The basic problem is that unions are themselves political organisms, and it is difficult to carry the public service spirit to the bargaining table. The union member may ardently support the New Deal in national elections, but his idealism is limited to the size of his pay check when a new contract is written. The union leader, dependent on membership support for his job, follows the course that means most pork chops for the rank and file.

That course is likely to carry him into an increasingly intimate relationship with industrial management. He tends more and more to make himself over in the image of the men who sit opposite him in collective bargaining—union salaries go up, opulent headquarters are built, the union leader stays at the best hotels and complains if his suite is not pretentious enough, the union buys him a winter home in Florida, he joins a country club, and in a thousand other ways satisfies his urge for status.*

And, as his living standards grow away from those of the men he represents, the necessity for holding their support becomes increasingly acute. Otherwise, he is faced with the prospect of going back to his work bench as a rank-and-filer himself, stripped of the power and comforts he has learned to cherish. The problem is a real one, a very human one, a very difficult one.

IT WILL take a lot of thought—a fundamental reexamination of most of the standards we hold for labor-industry conduct—to come up with any sound answer. The needle trades, operating under a benevolent union despotism, have worked out an admirable relationship under conditions too specialized to have much general application. Some headway toward a broader solution has been made in the Reuther-General Motors provision for non-inflationary wage increases based on technological improvements and other gains in productivity. But this slide rule approach is no complete answer. If labor and industry do not find a way to protect the public, a reaction will set in and the public will find its own way. The outcome may be an economy in which the government makes all decisions. In that kind of economy, all of us together stand to lose our freedom.

Working out effective safeguards for the community interest may mean a short-term exposure to more and longer strikes, but that price will be worth paying if in the end we get a thoroughgoing acceptance by all the power forces in our economy of the idea that the economy exists to serve the total welfare of society and not to provide special privileges to those who command the greatest strength.

We must recognize, too, that we will not get a pro-public labor movement simply "by making the labor movement more democratic." Indeed, the more democratic our unions are, the harder it may become for their leaders to make the public interest paramount. The leader who has a dozen rivals gunning for a job is more likely to try to outdo them in promising benefits to the rank and file than he is to promote a sober sense of civic responsibility. Most unions stored their education programs away so long ago that the chances of reviving them are slim. But somewhere, somehow, someone is going to have to make a start toward building affirmative membership support for relationships that are cooperative without being collusive. That is the road to a fruitful, free economy in which the benefits of rising productivity are applied to higher standards for consumers, workers, and employers alike.

*The head of the local Chamber of Commerce stirred appreciative laughter at the AFL convention in St. Louis last year when he said the evident prosperity of the unionists made it hard for him to tell from the dais whether the sign on one of the delegates' tables read "bankers" or "bakers." The tendency of many union heads to think of themselves as bankers exercising unbridled control over their union treasuries was strikingly reflected in John L. Lewis's decision to turn over $100,000 in United Mine Workers' funds to the orphaned ILA. There is no record to indicate that he bothered to ask anyone else in the mine union whether it was a good idea.

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# THE TWO CRADLES OF JEWISH LIBERTY

## *The New World and the Mother Country*

**CECIL ROTH**

ALL of us in England, as elsewhere, welcome the news of plans to celebrate the tercentenary of the settlement of Jews in what is now the United States. Such celebrations are all to the good, and this one especially for the possibility that it offers of an enlarged understanding of the heritage of freedom and opportunity for the more abundant life that Jews, like others, continue to enjoy in the West. For a historian, there is the additional satisfaction of seeing the materials of his concern brought to imaginative life for large numbers of non-specialists; some historians are so bold as to think that a grasp of historical realities is one of the chief roots of a proper pride in one's country and a proper understanding of one's role in it. But it must also be said that such occasions of official celebration also breed some uneasiness in the breast of the historian. For they have been known to give renewed currency to myths and legends that diminish, rather than enhance, our understanding of the true course of human events.

So, quite naturally, some of us in England have a bit of premonitory fear, maybe totally unwarranted, that the observance of this great anniversary may see a revival of the now superseded melodramatic presentation of the early chapters of the history of the United States in relation to the Mother Country, with American Jewish history presented in such a way as to retell an old—and historically inaccurate—tale, and to point an old—and confusing—moral.

WE CAN recall the old story from our childhoods without too much difficulty. We are shown, as it were, a group of fugitives from the oppression of the Old World who took refuge in the newly opened land beyond the Atlantic, found a ready welcome there, and, even before the American Revolution crystallized their rights, established among the sturdy pioneers a precedent of freedom such as the Old World had never known. From the very beginning, all on the one side of the Atlantic is bright, and all (or almost all) on the other side is made to appear dark.

This is very far from the truth—not perhaps in every detail, but certainly in spirit. We in England, too, are about to celebrate, in two years' time, the tercentenary of the establishment of our modern Jewish community. And if, in anticipation, we review in our minds the picture which Anglo-Jewish history presents, what we see actually is not far removed from that of American Jewish history.

For the American reader this is in many cases perhaps somewhat difficult to appre-

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FOR some months now preparations have been busily going forward for the celebration of the Tercentenary of Jewish settlement in America, which formally begins in September of this year. CECIL ROTH, British historian, whose distinguished work both in Jewish and general history is as well known here as in England, sends us, along with his congratulatory handshake across the sea, a friendly reminder. Americans are apt to think that no nation but America has known freedom; and many American Jews, correspondingly, are apt to think that nowhere but in America has their group been truly free. But Mr. Roth recalls for us that the Jews of his own country enjoyed both religious and social freedom as early and to as great a measure as they found here, and that in this, as in so much else, the great Atlantic democracies express a common tradition. Mr. Roth is the author of numerous volumes in Jewish history, of which we mention especially his *History of the Jews in England* (1941), the standard work in the field. He was born in London in 1899 and educated at Oxford.



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ciate because of the initial, shall we more politely say preconceptions, rather than prejudices, with which he inevitably begins. England, in early American history, is the arch-oppressor. *Ergo*, in 18th-century Jewish history, too, England belongs to the powers of darkness, and the New World brought deliverance where the Old World, including England, knew only oppression. Even in some of the most recent American Jewish historical literature, written on the basis of the widest documentary evidence, and on the whole with great objectivity, this point of view is adopted. But it is based on too wide a generalization.

Two points in particular impress themselves. The one is, that the roseate picture of the conditions of American Jewry is overstressed. I do not suggest that there was oppression, or anything like it; but there was occasional discomfort, and some degree of discrimination. The other is that, though there was general oppression in the Old World, it was not universal, and at the time with which we are dealing (that is, in the century before the Declaration of American Independence) England was on the whole an honorable exception. In fact, there was not at this period much difference between the condition of the Jews in the Mother Country and in the American Colonies which inherited her tradition and perpetuated her attitudes. What one may term the new 18th-century attitude towards the Jews was thus —if we look at the record—not an American innovation, but a common development of the Anglo-Saxon world. It seems to me that at present, when the future of Diaspora Jewry is centered almost wholly in the English-speaking countries, this is a matter of something more than academic significance. We do not merely speak the same language; we have basically, to a great extent, the same historic experience. We have enjoyed similar benefits, built our communities in circumstances of similar opportunity.

LET us survey, cursorily, conditions in the Old World at the time when American Jewish history began, at the close of the 17th century. The Moslem countries need hardly be taken into account in the present connection; in them the Jews—whether treated brutally as in North Africa or generously as in Turkey—were a people apart, subjected to special legislation, special taxation, and special circumstances. In Christian Europe, conditions varied widely. Spain and Portugal excluded the Jews entirely, and any person of Jewish descent found observing Jewish rites and ceremonies ran the risk of being burned alive. The same applied to southern Italy and Sicily. In the north of Italy, in the areas where Jews were allowed to live they were shut up in ghettoes from which they dared not absent themselves overnight; they had to wear a distinguishing badge, were excluded from all means of livelihood except wholesale trade, pawnbroking, peddling, and dealing in secondhand clothes, and subjected to all manner of other indignities and disabilities; even their children might be seized, on the flimsiest pretexts, in order to be brought up as Christians.

In Germany, conditions were very much the same or even worse. Great areas and important cities excluded the Jews entirely; they were compelled to pay special tolls on the highway; the number of their marriages was restricted so as to keep down the Jewish population; and the fact that here and there influential court Jews (such as the famous Jew Süss) might temporarily enjoy great influence and wealth, did not qualify the gloom of the general picture. As late as 1670 the Jews were expelled from Austria, as late as 1738 from Württemberg, as late as 1745 from Prague and Bohemia generally. They had been driven out of France in the 14th century and, at the time we speak of, were still not allowed officially to live there: although, to be sure, in the newly acquired eastern provinces (Alsace and Lorraine) there were some old-established communities that barely managed to live under the same miserable conditions as the Jews of Germany, and in the seaports of the southwest (Bordeaux and Bayonne) some Marrano fugitives from Spain and Portugal were allowed to practice a semi-clandestine Judaism. The

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greatest mass of European Jewry lived in Poland—a rightless, hopeless, miserable ethnic minority, terrorized by recurrent accusations of ritual murder, and with little hope except in emigration. Russia was *judenrein*, permitting no Jewish settlement.

So far as the continent of Europe was concerned, the only country which presented a generally favorable picture was Holland, from which both the English and the American Jewish communities, to some extent, drew their origin and inspiration. Holland is in fact to be excepted from the generalizations made in this presentation, its Jewish community belonging as it were to the new Anglo-Saxon (or rather Atlantic, or perhaps Puritan) nexus. It may, however, be observed that even in Holland there were qualifications to the generally happy record. Some parts of the country (e.g. Utrecht) excluded Jews from residence; there was a special form of Jewish oath, and special Jewish taxation; and outbreaks of violence were not wholly unknown.

As it happened, it was approximately the same time as the "St. Charles" brought the first Jewish group to New Amsterdam that the Jews began to settle (or rather resettle after an absence of three and a half centuries) in England. There is no need here to describe the antecedents or the circumstances of the resettlement. Briefly, it may be said that the first crypto-Jewish settlers arrived about 1632, that by 1653 it was alleged that "some quarters of our city smell as rank of" Judaism as Amsterdam itself, that Menasseh ben Israel attempted to get the resettlement placed on a legal footing when he came over to London in 1655, and that an open or semi-open Jewish community was organized in 1656. A point that must be emphasized is that there was no official act of admission—no formal agreement between the Jewish representatives and the government, as the result of which the community came into being. The characteristic feature of the resettlement was its informality: Oliver Cromwell, not succeeding in persuading his council to do as he wanted, decided to "connive" at the presence of the Jews. (Cromwell was mindful of the help that the Jews might give, and was, besides, motivated by his general religious tolerance.) Since there was no formal permission or contract, there could, of course, be no regulations; and since there were no regulations, English Judaism was allowed to develop in a completely untrammeled fashion. As a result, the resettlement of the Jews in England took place in an atmosphere of almost unqualified freedom; and this became the characteristic of the new period of Jewish history in the Anglo-Saxon countries, irradiating from the Mother Country to the New World.

As I have expressed it elsewhere, on more than one occasion, though political emancipation was not yet thought of (and how could it be, with Non-conformists and Roman Catholics excluded from it?), what may be termed social emancipation prevailed from the outset. The Jews who settled in England in the middle of the 17th century onwards could live in whatever city they pleased and in any part of the place of their choice; they could dress as they pleased; they could with certain reservations engage in any calling they pleased; they were subjected to no galling special regulations or restrictions; they could employ Gentile servants and workmen; they did not have to take a degrading form of oath before the courts of law, or pay special taxation; and those disabilities from which they suffered were not directed against them but were shared by all who were not members of the Church of England.

To put it succinctly: the ghetto system (in its general rather than its literal sense: oppressive discrimination was possible even without a formally constituted Jewish quarter), which applied universally on the continent of Europe except Holland at this time, was unknown in England, as in the English dependencies generally, after the resettlement. Here is a fundamental difference between the record of Jews and of Jewish emancipation in the Anglo-Saxon countries and in other parts of the world: a difference

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which Continental historians failed to appreciate, and which makes the background of Jewish history in these lands wholly unlike, in a most significant fashion, that of Central and Eastern Europe. Neither in England nor in America was it a question of "Emancipation" in the Continental sense —that is, of emergence from slavery to liberty —but rather, as in wider constitutional matters, of "freedom slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent," perhaps, to be sure, with some kind of legislative encouragement. From 1933 onwards, we were menacingly warned by some of those who sought refuge in our midst, and some of those who wished to reconstitute Jewish life on a wholly different basis, that we too might slip back into the ghetto. It is no business of mine here to discuss whether or not this pessimism was justified. But it is assuredly germane to emphasize the fact that in our background there was no ghetto.

It is perhaps worthwhile to compare stage by stage the process by which the Jewish settlers in what was to be the United States consolidated their position with the process in England at about the same period. I use for the purpose the careful synopsis published by the American Jewish Tercentenary Committee itself. We are informed that the original settlers, "wanderers in search of freedom, had caught a glimpse of their goal in this little Dutch village between the wilderness and the sea," then known as New Amsterdam. Their first victory was the right to remain, obtained on April 16, 1655, from the Dutch East India Company. The Marrano settlers in England at this period had in fact never had their right of residence challenged officially since the beginning of the century. At the Whitehall Conference which assembled in December 1655 to consider Menasseh ben Israel's proposals for the readmission of the Jews, the legal experts had pronounced that there was no law which excluded them from England. In May 1656, a Marrano of Spanish birth, proceeded against as an enemy alien, pleaded that he was a Jew and found his plea admitted by the justices. Thus, the legality of the residence of Jews in England, as a juridical right rather than a special privilege, was established—a fact that cannot have been without influence when the new American Jewish settlement passed in 1664 under English rule.

The second stage of which we learn in the consolidation of the position of New York—i.e. American—Jewry was the vindication of the right to serve in the militia. This has perhaps been overemphasized by American historians—in a frontier town, it is neither easy nor sensible to dispense with the services of any able-bodied male. The position in England was not therefore similar in this respect, and the problem was not put to the test so early. Nevertheless, from 1685 at the latest, the London Synagogue furnished three soldiers, fully armed, to the Trainbands which were called out when the peace was threatened, and a more consistent record of voluntary military service was not long delayed.

The next point in the record of the establishment of the New York American community was the right to travel and trade —in the first instance along the Hudson and Delaware Rivers (November-December 1655). So far as English Jewry is concerned, there is in this connection a very important point to note. The right to travel and to trade freely seems to have been taken from the beginning as implicit in the right of residence. The nature of the trade may have been to some extent restricted locally (we must return to this point), but that Jews were allowed to trade was not, so far as I know, seriously disputed at any time. The fact of settlement implied moreover the right of travel to and fro, and hence the right of travel generally: never was there (as on the Continent) any need for special formalities or permission, or any obligation to pay special tolls. Moreover, the right of settlement was not localized, or bound up with any one city. If the Jews were permitted to reside in London, this was by virtue of the fact that it was legal for them to reside in the country, and the right of residence else-

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where could not be challenged. Jews are to be found living outside London within a very few years of the resettlement, some time before the end of the 17th century. Early in the 18th, specific communities began to be established in various provincial cities—well before any permanent traces of Jewish communities are to be found in any city other than New York in what was to become the United States. I believe that England was the only country of the Western world in which the Jews exercised at this time unrestricted rights of residence.

Too great importance is not presumably to be attached to the fact that the New Amsterdam Jews established the right to have their own burial ground in February 1656. This was inevitable, if Jews were to be allowed to reside in the country at all. In London, exactly a month and two days after the New Amsterdam Jews were granted permission to have their cemetery, the group of Marranos headed by Menasseh ben Israel had petitioned Oliver Cromwell for leave to have a synagogue and that "those which may dey of owr nation may be buried in such place out of the cittye as we shall thinck Convenient with the Proprietors Leaue in whose Land the place shall be." Although Cromwell's answer is not preserved (it was probably communicated verbally), the land for this House of Life was leased early in the following year, and public interments began to take place there shortly after. The English and American concessions were thus almost contemporaneous. At approximately the same time (probably in the summer of 1656) a proper congregation was organized in London, as has been mentioned, and early in 1657 a semi-public synagogue was opened. It is noteworthy that the directors of the Dutch West India Company had given instructions, on June 14, 1656, that the Jews were not to be permitted to conduct public religious services in New Amsterdam, no specially constructed synagogue being indeed known there until 1730; the exquisite Bevis Marks Synagogue in London had already at that time been open for twenty-eight years.

"The right to own their own homes" figures next in the official brochure among the steps whereby the little group of New York Jews consolidated their position. This as a matter of fact oversimplifies a complex and in some ways contradictory measure. The order of June 14 referred to above had indeed empowered the Jews to trade and to buy real estate. So far as the ownership of real estate was concerned, the question was easier in a new country than in an old one. In England all sorts of complications existed. At the beginning, it seems that native-born or endenizened Jews did in fact buy landed property, sometimes on a large scale. Later on, some doubt arose as to whether this was in fact legal, an antiquated medieval statute which ostensibly forbade it having come to light. Henceforth, the practice was restricted for a time. Nevertheless an easy alternative was possible in cases of doubt: to acquire an interminably long lease (such as 999 years) at a nominal or symbolic rental—a generally common practice in England. The tenant in this case did not technically "own" the land, but to say that he did not own his home would be a quibble. This was not seriously considered a disability, nor was the nominal difference in this respect between English and American Jewry of any real significance.

On the other hand, the same provision of June 14, 1656, excluded the Jews of New Amsterdam from the right to open retail shops or to practice crafts. Our consideration of this point must be taken into account with the next of the rights established by the little group—that of the burghership (April 20, 1657). Here, we come to a point which could be of the highest significance, for to enjoy the rights of a citizen then had a very great importance. Dr. Jacob Marcus, however, than whom there is no greater authority on American Jewish history living today, gives it as his considered opinion that "the Jews . . . were second-class burghers, citizens with circumscribed economic liberties . . . they are not found . . . in the official list of the 'freemen' of the town." In England—or at least in London; I do not think that any similar restriction applied in

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other places—conditions in this respect were nominally a good deal worse, for after an initial hesitation Jews were formally excluded from the Freedom of the City of London, which implied exclusion from practicing handicrafts and carrying on retail trade within its liberties. However—and this is the important point to note—already at this time "London" and the "City of London" were two different things, the residential and commercial area extending far, far beyond the old City nucleus administered by the Lord Mayor and Common Council. Hence the restriction, though in some ways galling, was almost meaningless. If a Jew wished to open a shop for retail trade, or establish a small manufactory, all he had to do was to move just outside the City boundaries: a subterfuge which in New York was impossible. So far as wholesale trade was concerned, there was of course no restriction; and when the Royal Exchange (to be carefully distinguished from the Stock Exchange, with which it is often confused even by competent authorities) was reorganized in 1697, one-twelfth of the places on it were reserved for Jewish brokers and agents.

In the political sense, a further important step on the path of Jewish emancipation in Colonial America came in the 18th century with the recognition of the right of Jews to the franchise: something unknown on the continent of Europe until the French Revolution, and not universal until long after. In 1737, in a contested election in New York, the votes cast by Jews were disqualified on the ground that Jews did not have the franchise in England. In 1761, however, Jews were admitted to the polls, apparently without difficulty. What the precise position was in England at this time it is not easy to say with any confidence. The Returning Officer had the power to demand from voters the Oath of Abjuration—aimed, actually, against Roman Catholics—which was phrased in a form repugnant to the Jewish conscience. But this power was seldom exercised, and there is good reason to believe that well before the American Revolution native-born English Jews who possessed the necessary qualifications did in fact vote in Parliamentary elections if they pleased. It must be emphasized that the political emancipation of the Jews in 1858—which we know most about because of the drama surrounding the fight for its granting—involved only their admission to Parliament.

IT IS necessary to devote a few lines at this point to a famous earlier episode in connection with this question, in Anglo-Jewish history of the 18th century, which has been generally misinterpreted on both sides of the Atlantic, thus tending to distort the entire picture. In 1753, the English Parliament passed a bill for Jewish naturalization. This attracted some attention, was seized upon by the Opposition, gave rise to an exaggerated agitation, and in consequence was repealed before the end of the year. Thereupon, some historians have pronounced, Anglo-Jewry relapsed once more into conditions of medieval darkness: and the contrast between this reaction and American conditions of semi-emancipation has been more than once emphasized. But this interpretation is wholly incorrect. The Jewish naturalization bill did not have as its object the naturalization of English Jews. In fact, English-born Jews were, from the beginning, considered, and treated, as English subjects (here again was a striking contrast to conditions in some parts of the Continent), and they had all the rights of Englishmen except those from which other non-members of the Church of England, or non-Protestants, were excluded. Foreign Jews could enjoy the same rights once they were naturalized or "endenizened," but this was a difficult and expensive process. The so-called "Jew Bill" was simply intended to facilitate and encourage this process, and those who availed themselves of it would merely have been put in the same position as their native-born children. After the repeal of the act, they had to rely again on the previous cumbersome method. Jewish naturalization hence has no bearing whatsoever on the question of Jewish Emancipation. Its repeal was a matter of political maneuvering, and it is ex

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traordinary that notwithstanding the vast outpouring of inflammatory propaganda by the Opposition there was, so far as one can tell, no outbreak of violence.

A very similar Parliamentary measure had been passed as a matter of fact a few years before, without opposition, for the benefit of alien Jews in the American Colonies, whose settlement there it was hoped to encourage by this means. Not very much advantage was taken of it, but there was one notorious case which should be mentioned. Under its provisions, Aaron Lopez, the great merchant prince of Newport, together with another local Jew, applied for naturalization in 1761 to the Assembly of the Province of Rhode Island. They were however refused, on the basis of a local law of 1663 which provided that "no person who does not profess the Christian religion can be admitted free of this colony." Here we have the traditional picture, of the contrast between the intolerance of the Mother Country and the tolerance of the Colonies, in reverse; there was a conflict as it were between the legislation of the English Parliament and that of the dependency, in which the latter showed up in the worse light, and this in a period in which quite apart from the provisions of the short-lived "Jew Bill," many Jews were in fact being freely "endenizened" at Westminster. Lopez ultimately secured what he wanted in Massachusetts; it is interesting—I do not know whether it was significant—that this Colony had at the time no Jewish community.

I DO not wish to suggest that all was rosy with the Jews, at all times, in 18th-century England. There was more than a sufficiency of vulgar literary onslaughts. There were occasional unpleasantnesses, sometimes even physically expressed. Though no actual violence is recorded during the "Jew Bill" agitation (unless we should include the booing of a prominent Jew in the theater!) life must have been somewhat uncomfortable for Jews at this time. The bearded, uncouth Jewish peddlers sometimes went through unpleasant experiences. As the result of the discovery of the activities of a band of Jewish malefactors of an exceptionally unpleasant type in 1771, foreign Jews were mobbed in the streets. But all told, this did not add up to very much, and it was trivial as compared with the perpetual and acute physical discomfort which was at this time the lot of Continental Jewry. Moreover, the same sort of thing was not unknown in America. One of the New York papers in 1743 printed an account by an eyewitness of the disgraceful scenes at a Jewish burial when "such a Rabble was got together, it was with much Difficulty the Corpse was interr'd" and Christian formulas were apparently gabbled over the open grave. I do not recall having come across any similar episode in 18th-century England.

It would, of course, be absurd nevertheless to deny that it was easier for the Jew to become adjusted in the 18th century to the American climate than to that of the Mother Country. Obviously, in a new country there was not the same degree of social stratification in which it was difficult for a newcomer to find his place. Even in places where the official religion was that of the Church of England, there was not the same degree of uniformity or regimentation emphasizing the separateness of the Non-conformist; while elsewhere there was a variety of religious manifestation in which Judaism appeared only as a single eccentric and not particularly noteworthy facet. In a small, restricted society everyone was accepted on his personal merits: even fanatics could not afford to discard an interesting or informed companion simply on the score of his faith. In an expanding economy, there was opportunity of advancement for every man, without trespassing on his neighbors' preserves. There was no conventional organization of commerce and industry which resented new faces and new methods. Hence the Jewish immigrant—like the non-Jewish, to be sure—was able to acclimatize himself more easily. But with these reservations, the English and American backgrounds were much the same. Benjamin Disraeli's grandfather would never have gone back from London to live in his native Italy, where he would have been thrust back into

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the ghetto and compelled to wear the Jewish Badge of Shame. But the children of the Franks family of New York can hardly have noticed any difference in their circumstances when, at the same period, they were sent "home" to England for their education.

The foregoing pages have not, of course, taken into account all the social limitations and the inconveniences from which English Jews may have suffered at this time by reason of their faith. They could not, for example, enter universities. They could not therefore qualify as physicians (though if they qualified elsewhere—for example, in Scotland, where there were no difficulties—they were allowed to practice medicine). They were not admitted to practice at the Bar, though they could (and did) become solicitors. And there were various other restrictions and annoyances which complicated their lives. Nevertheless, none of these—and in fact no disabilities almost of any sort—were "anti-Semitic": enforced against the Jews as Jews. No legislation whatsoever of this period was specifically directed against them; indeed, they were not mentioned in any Act of Parliament (save on the occasion of the repeal of the "Jew Bill") except to confirm or to extend their rights. Whatever disabilities they suffered from were common to all those who did not conform to the Church of England. In the case of Non-conformists, they were perhaps somewhat less galling, and certainly easier to evade. In the case of Roman Catholics, on the other hand, they were more severe, and more strictly enforced by far. The formula which so long excluded the Jews from the House of Commons was originally framed, indeed, without any idea that it might ultimately operate against them. Similar religious restrictions against unpopular religious minorities prevailed, of course, in the 18th century in many parts of the American Colonies as well, and here, too, the Jews occasionally suffered incidentally as a result.

THE social emancipation which was part of the common heritage of the English-speaking world received its formal expression and completion on the establishment of American independence. The Constitution that the United States adopted in 1787 stipulated that no religious test should be required as qualification for any office or public trust. It was this, rather than the enactments in France a few years later, which set the tradition for Jewish Emancipation in the modern world. It is nevertheless desirable to remind the reader—even the American reader, perhaps—that this covered only positions under the Federal government. In some of the individual states, Emancipation lagged deplorably. Religious equality was embodied indeed in the constitution of the State of New York (1777) and Virginia established the fullest religious freedom in Jefferson's famous Act of 1785. But in the constitution of North Carolina (1776) Jews and Catholics were specifically debarred from holding public office of any sort; and though in the case of the latter this restriction was soon overlooked, it was only with the greatest difficulty that Jacob Henry was able to take his seat in the legislature after his election in 1808/9, and the clause remained in operation until 1868. Emancipation did not become a fact in Maryland until 1825. In New Hampshire, Jews and Catholics were ineligible to hold certain offices until as late as 1876/7. By this time, English Jewry had been fully emancipated for almost a generation. It must be emphasized that the reason for the long delay in the formal completion of this process lay in the fact that the disabilities from which English Jews suffered were relatively so slight, being virtually confined by 1858 to their inability to sit in Parliament—a restriction which many persons regarded with complete indifference. A bald comparison of dates is, of course, misleading, and there is danger of reducing the whole argument to a quibble. But it is as erroneous to think of English Jewry as rightless until 1858 as it is to regard American Jewry as unemancipated until 1877. And I am not quite sure that the utilization of political rights—as apart from the possession of them—did not in fact make more rapid progress in England than it did in the

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United States. Certainly Jews in some number held high public office in England long before they did in the United States.

This essay has necessarily dealt thus far mainly with points of detail. But such treatment necessarily obscures something of the general picture, and especially its positive side. For the essential part of the social emancipation of the Jews in England as in America in pre-Revolutionary days did not lie in the fact that they overthrew this or that disability, or that they possessed this or that privilege, but *in the general position they enjoyed in society*. It was in this, rather than in minutiae of regulation here and there, that a new epoch in Jewish life was begun at this period in the countries of the North Atlantic seaboard—on both sides of it.

In America, the process was possibly speeded by the smallness and newness of the society; in England, it may have been retarded by the great newly arrived mass of poor Jews from Central Europe; but in general terms the picture is the same. We find the Jews living in the very same streets as their Christian fellow townsmen, or in country houses in the same areas, and living lives which are basically identical. They dressed in the same fashion, they ate much the same dishes (even though the one might be based on ritually prepared food and retain nostalgic Continental reminiscences), they had similar households. They went to the same playhouses, they diverted themselves with the same sports, they read much the same books, they grumbled together at the government, they cheered or booed the royal family, they lost their money at the same gambling resorts, they passed the summer in the same watering places, they intermingled on equal terms.

Solomon da Costa Athias, the founder in 1761 of the Hebrew collection at the British Museum, was a rural philanthropist who played some part in the life of the countryside near his residence in Essex, and whose voice carried much weight with the landowners of the vicinity. The friendly relations between their neighbors and the Anglo-American Franks family, of Isleworth near London, caused some spiteful comment at the time of the "Jew Bill" agitation. Horace Walpole, the letter-writer, as half a dozen passages of his correspondence serve to show, intermingled freely at Twickenham with his Jewish neighbors—especially the Franks and Salvador families (the latter, too, with American connections) and the horticultural enthusiast Abraham Prado. Mrs. Judith Levy, "the Queen of Richmond Green," who rebuilt the Great Synagogue in her extreme old age, towards the end of the century was a notable figure in society, playing at half-guinea quadrille with aristocratic cronies, including the Countess of Yarmouth, Lady Holderness, and Lord Stormont. The death of Moses Franks in 1789 left his close friend and neighbor, General Cowper, disconsolate. Sampson Gideon and Joseph Salvador advised British governments in questions of finance.

A Jew intrigued for the Old Pretender, and a Jew was executed for his part in the Gordon riots. Half a dozen persons of Jewish birth received the coveted honor of election to the Royal Society, of which the wayward Emanuel Mendes da Costa was Clerk. Solomon Mendes was a close friend of the poets Richard Savage and James Thomson (author of *The Seasons*) and in cordial correspondence with the publisher Robert Dodsley. It would not be difficult to assemble other instances of such familiar intercourse in the lower—indeed, the lowest—strata of society. It was this social emancipation which prepared the ground for (though indeed on the other hand it minimized the necessity of) political emancipation; and the examples collected here at random are assuredly sufficient to show that this was by no means a phenomenon restricted to the New World.

By and large, American Jewry, in its formative period in the 18th century, was simply a microcosm—and not relatively on a very minute scale—of English Jewry. We Jews of the Anglo-Saxon world are brought together not only by a common destiny and a common tongue, but also by a similar historical experience.

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# THE QUEST FOR THE GRAND MORAL SYNTHESIS

## *Reflections on a Meeting of Minds*

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

IN SEPTEMBER, as a way of celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America held a large conference to inquire into the state of American morals. Such conferences have been extremely popular in recent years. No college president could face his board of trustees unless his campus had been host to at least one. They satisfy all interests. They are timely and fashionable, and yet far more concerned with timeless subjects, with religion, philosophy, and the classics, than forums in the 30's were. Inside or outside the colleges, these conferences are intended to build up morale in a time of danger, and encourage the return to tradition or absolute moral values as a way of saving democracy.

For anyone who wanted to see how such conferences work, or what they imply, the gathering at the Jewish Theological Seminary was especially revealing. Larger and more elaborately organized than most such meetings, it extended over three days. Because of the more or less religious nature of the occasion, a good many members of the clergy took part.

Also, this conference was not an isolated event. It had the same leaders and many of the same participants as the annual meetings of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, Inc., which had been going on for a decade under the direction of Lyman Bryson, Louis Finkelstein, and R. M. MacIver. It was to be judged, then, not as a single event, but as the latest stage in ten years of effort by America's top scientists, philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologists to provide democracy with a grand scientific-religious-philosophic synthesis. At the 1949 conference Christian P. Richard said, "We have philosophic systems. We have no philosophic synthesis. Is such a synthesis possible? I would not venture to say that I know. What seems very certain, however, is that the survival of democracy and civilized society will ultimately depend on this one thing alone."

### II

SUCH metaphysical idealism, the belief that a purely intellectual construction can decide a country's fate, underlies a good deal of the discussion at these conferences and helps to explain their peculiarities. To understand what went on at the meeting held by the Jewish Theological Seminary, it is helpful to look first at the conferences which preceded it.

The organizers of the annual Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, whose full proceedings have been published in a shelf-full of fat, rather neglected volumes,

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THERE are times, ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS suggests, when the inveterate American practice of "talking things over" may not prove a panacea—is it that some of the deeper questions are perhaps not susceptible of solution by "democratic consensus"? Mr. Davis's reflections take off from the Conference on Moral Standards held this past September at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, which enlisted a particularly distinguished assemblage of American minds in science, philosophy, religion, and the "communications industries." But what Mr. Davis writes may apply equally well to almost any one of those many conferences, conclaves, and convocations that have become so fixed an element of our academic life. Mr. Davis, associate professor of English at Smith College, has written short stories and articles for the *New Yorker, The American Scholar, Partisan Review,* the *New York Times Book Review,* and many other periodicals. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1908, and is a graduate of Harvard.



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have always been very conscious of having an immediate historic mission. The series began in 1939, under the threat of Nazi totalitarianism, as a way of mobilizing democratic intellectual strength for the defense of democratic institutions. Nazi Germany seemed formidable because, as a dictatorship, it could act decisively and with all its strength. American intellectuals wanted a comparable democratic unity, to be arrived at, however, by free discussion and consent.

In the realm of ideas, at least, this unity turned out to be hard to achieve. The urgencies of the war years made the conference participants burn with impatience at their slow progress. The preface to the volume issued in 1943 appealed to experts in the techniques of discussion to work out radical, new methods of reconciling ideas, since the old ones seemed to get nowhere. "We must find more effective means for enabling scholars and men of letters to create a consensus of opinion among themselves . . . on a precise and definite basis." Since a few hours or even days of exchange of opinion had so little effect, it was suggested that groups of scholars "meet with one another over considerable periods, perhaps spending their vacations together, so that they may think together."

The new methods of discussion were not discovered, however, nor did the desired consensus appear. Because of this, the tenth conference in 1949 was devoted to reviewing those which had gone before. The participants, people like Arthur E. Murphy, Margaret Mead, Quincey Wright, Harold Lasswell, Carl Friedrich, John Lafarge, T. V. Smith, and Lyman Bryson, were asked to read over the papers they had contributed to earlier sessions to see how their views had changed, and whether the conferences had been a help. This summary and retrospection was published in 1950 in a volume called *Perspectives on a Troubled Decade*. Many of the contributors were troubled not only by the decade but by their own inability to agree with or even understand each other.

Louis Wirth said, "I know of no group in which I have participated in which my colleagues have been more learned, more earnest, more tolerant, and at the same time more unaffected by the voice of others." Eliot Chapple, an anthropologist, found consensus further away than when the conferences began. "It seems to me that there has been a retrogression to the old tendency of scientists, philosophers and religionists to take a position and maintain it against all comers." Edgar S. Brightman, a philosopher, called Chapple's remarks on the relation of science to ethics "very naive and uncritical."

The same difficulties occurred within disciplines. In response to criticism of his paper by Mr. Brightman, Milton Nahm, also a philosopher, replied: "It is paradoxical that a paper on communication and the communicability of aspects of culture should fail in the task of communication between Professor Brightman and me. The fault, no doubt, is mine and, inasmuch as this is my second effort in this direction, I shall regard the barrier as insurmountable."

Since they sought synthesis and found so many stumbling blocks in the way, the conferences avoided immediate public problems which might cause the participants to become more partisan. Harold de Wolf, for example, was rebuked for bringing up the matter of public aid to parochial schools at a conference including Catholics and devoted to "unity in diversity."

There was also reluctance to look too closely at the validity of democracy itself. In this connection Rudolf Allers proposed a troubling paradox. If democracy is unquestionably superior to other forms of government of a more authoritarian kind, it must be so in accordance with some objective and unchanging order of values. But if such values exist, their existence is incompatible with the relativism and tolerance and pluralism of beliefs which we now associate with democracy. Various attempts were made to set up cross- or super-cultural criteria for the Good Society by which democracy would get top rating. But as Karl Deutsch said of Geoffrey Gorer's list, such criteria are usually simply a projection of our own individualist or equalitarian preferences.

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On the whole there was remarkably little searching analysis of Communism as a system or a historical development, though Communism was so large a part of the challenge to which these conferences considered themselves the response.

These conferences have, of course, produced some brilliant displays of dialectic. A vast amount of intelligence and knowledge has been brought to bear on the problems which have bedeviled man ever since he began reflecting on society and on the operations of his own mind. The results should be fascinating, and in a certain sense they are. Yet the published volumes of the proceedings have received surprisingly little attention, either in the intellectual community or in general public opinion, considering the ambitious nature of the project and the amount of cerebration it represents.

The reason for this is clear enough if, instead of sampling here and there, one tries to read these volumes straight through as efforts toward synthesis. The effect is totally bewildering, not because the things said are meaningless, but because *so much of the context is ignored that would make their meaning clear.* As it is, many of the criticisms of papers and answers to criticisms sound like the disputes between Mr. Square, the moralist, and Mr. Thwackum, the divine, in Fielding's *Tom Jones.*

The men and women invited to these conferences are professionally successful intellectuals who have risen to the top after years of struggle in which their ideas have played an important part. They represent not only church sects, college departments, government bureaucracies, but particular tendencies or factions within these organizations. Because their ideas are bound up with their prestige and institutional authority, and since a great deal is at stake in any change of ideas, their natural impulse is to affirm their present ideas and to defend them with dialectic skill when they are attacked. Only under pressure of institutional or political circumstances would they be likely to change them. And in the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, no such pressure can be exerted. The only threats are logical and semantic, and the participants are well practiced in dealing with them. In fact, it might be said that they are where they are because of their forensic powers.

Since there is no attempt to find practical solutions to controversial social problems in these conferences, all that could modify ideas is other ideas. Theoretically this is all that is required, and this is the premise on which the conferences profess to operate. If there are ethical absolutes and permanent truths which exist independently of being known or being practiced, but which are discoverable through reason, then reasonable men, gathered together in an intellectual exchange freed from practical or partisan motives, ought to be able to discover them, to define them, and to unite in accepting them.

## III

IN PRACTICE it does not work this way. The September conference on moral standards held by the Jewish Theological Seminary helped to show why it does not work, and helped to explain why such conferences continue to be held, even though it is quite impossible that they should reach their objective. On this objective, nevertheless, we are to believe that the whole fate of Western civilization depends.

Because it was a semi-religious occasion and because so many clergymen were present, the conference on moral standards tried to walk an even narrower path than the conferences which preceded it. To keep from embarrassing the humanists, and to let the Catholics lie down with the Lutherans, it was agreed that no one should try to convert anyone else. The call to the Conference assured everybody that religion would be considered only in its institutional character, and not as individual and personal experience. There was to be no theological discussion as to the validity and truth of one creed as compared to another.

The attempt to unite religion and morality, to harmonize the principles of Square and Thwackum, without discussing religious ex-

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periences, much less truth, is extremely inhibiting when so much of the current interest in religion and moral decisions has a highly personal or existential character. In his opening remarks, Rabbi Finkelstein, president of the Seminary, tried to preserve a little sense of inwardness when he declared that "the test by which we will measure our success at the end of this Conference will be whether we, individually, have grown in moral stature, and not by whether we have learned to address others more eloquently or effectively on the subject."

The other introductory speakers, however, preferred to stick to formal analysis and semantics, where they were professionally expert and at ease. They were eager for "reformulation," "redefinition." In an age of scientific thinking, said Lyman Bryson, "we want to approach the problem of moral betterment by rational procedures." Dr. Finkelstein himself felt that the enhancement of life and the improvement of our position in the world at large depended on our finding a way "to articulate our basic moral values in contemporary terms." He said, "The first step is to find out what is really happening in our community, our occupations, the major activities of our civilization, so that we can make a reasonably accurate diagnosis. Then, after that, we can make plans for reform."

This was a large order. It was quickly clear that the conferees could not agree, even empirically, on what was happening to our civilization. Despite the newspaper publicity about political corruption and moral degradation, some speakers were sure that our political morality was higher than it had been in the post-Civil War period or than British political morality had been all through the 18th century. Perhaps—and this was a flattering idea—we were aroused morally because we were becoming more sensitive morally, because our standards were rising. The business and labor participants seemed to feel that bigness in business and labor improved moral standards. And so far as private or sexual morals went, some sociologists contended that statistics about divorce and sex deviations were not a sign of decadence, but of a transition to a new morality more consistent with respect for the individual and for psychological facts. Others were less optimistic, or believed that even if standards were rising they were not affecting political behavior fast enough to save us in the world struggle against Communism.

Such disagreements gave a delightful sense of freedom from any preconceptions, even about the circumstances of the national situation which had seemed the urgent reason for the conference. They created the rather unscientific and unscholarly illusion that the problem could be tackled afresh as if it had never been discussed before. This is partly what the New Conservatives mean when they talk about American Innocence. There was no reference to preceding conferences, though many of the participants had been at them. In fact, some conferees, like T. V. Smith, Lyman Bryson, Richard McKeon, Roger Baldwin, Quincey Wright, Mark Starr, Ordway Tead, and George Counts, had encountered each other at innumerable occasions of this kind. They were used to each other, and nothing that the carefully selected participants were likely to say could hold many surprises for them.

This sense of starting anew, of facing problems for the first time, was even more striking in the eight specialized panels on education, the family, religion, the arts, etc., into which the conference was divided after the brief opening session. Here there could be a maximum of direct, free, and lively interchange. No papers were read; they had been sent to the panelists before the sessions opened. There were no non-participating auditors, and the talk was not recorded. Everyone could tell the truth about his profession and bare his own heart.

As in previous conferences, partisan politics were ruled out, or the attempt to test ideas by coming to definite conclusions on specific issues like the invocation of the Fifth Amendment by intellectuals, or the trials of war criminals, or the politics of coexistence and other moral questions characteristic of this period. Inevitably then, in attempting to give some kind of meaning to

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the variety of questions raised by the papers, the panelists were driven back to an examination of first principles of the copybook sort. Most moral situations, alas, involve more than reflection and discussion; they involve choice, even if this is simply choice between acting and not acting. Choice indicates or determines values. How are the choices determined? How free are they? Often the choice is between competing interests or goods or loyalties. How are these to be graded? What if one has to choose between a higher good for a smaller group or a lower good for a larger group? If values or ends are more than personal and preferential, what gives them validity, and how is this validity to be discovered and affirmed?

The panelists had to become amateur philosophers, and discuss in a few hours what a college course on ethics would devote weeks to, and do it, moreover, without textbook or teacher. They had to try to reconcile three kinds of good, *bonum utile,* instrumental or economic good, *bonum jucundum,* hedonistic or subjective good, and *bonum honestum,* moral, autonomous, or absolute good. Though the participants were keen and informed and the conversation lively, the results obviously could not be very satisfactory, either as formal philosophy or public advice. The divergences in assumptions, acknowledged and unacknowledged, were too great. All that presumably could be counted on was some degree of belief in democracy, in the responsibilities of intellectuals, and in the primacy of the individual.

## IV

And yet it was precisely in these three matters that strange inconsistencies developed, to make the conference more revealing than its formal statements acknowledged.

The belief in democracy, in popular self-government, though abstractly affirmed, did not get much support in the practical discussion in most of the panels. As compared to other systems in the past, our present institutions were thought to be reasonably successful in controlling the power and greed and selfishness of those at the top. What the panelists found themselves complaining about in the standards or morals of the churches, schools, mass media, etc., was not that they were too little responsive to the popular will, but too much so.

Except for some sects and some prophetic groups in the larger churches, it was felt that churchly attitudes on most social questions reflected more the views of the churchgoers than any divine imperative. Colleges had too often yielded to the pressures of alumni and lowered their standards to meet the needs of the increased numbers seeking higher education, or adapted curricula to the materialism of the business world, or built stadiums and laboratories instead of hiring professors of Greek. In the mass media, the standards of the producers were thought to be nearly always higher than those of their audience, and though they had to make money to stay producers, they usually put on more "prestige" performances, or performances appealing to limited groups, than a purely statistical analysis of audience tastes would justify.

In politics this conflict between standards and democratic demands was felt most acutely. Politicians, especially politicians in the Democratic party, learn that to stay in power they have to give the people what they want. They do this even though they themselves believe that what is wanted is not good for the people or for the future of the country. In order to acquire the power needed to achieve their good ends, young intellectuals who go into practical politics often outdo professional politicians in the unscrupulousness of their means. At one of the sessions a man who has fought bravely and conspicuously all his life for the extension of democracy and democratic freedom admitted that he was, after all, not sure that achieving these meant a higher standard of morality. There were vehement attacks on the Congressional investigations into Communism, but for all these denunciations and their broad public import, the conferees could not escape the uncomfortable suspicion that if the American people were to vote in 1953 on the Bill of Rights as liberals like themselves interpreted it, they might well vote it out of existence!

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The tenor of the discussion suggested that in the present state of our society distinctively moral action is more likely to be aristocratic than democratic. It means preferring the higher good of a small group to the lower good of a large one, or choosing what seems good for the people instead of what the people themselves want. The most frequent complaint was that public men lack the courage to resist pressure, take unpopular positions, accept defeat from the voters rather than say or do what they do not feel is right.

But if a man is to sacrifice his own immediate interests in order to stand firm against what a group—or even the majority of the nation—thinks are its interests, on what strength is he to draw and what right has he to think he is right? If one believes in democratic society, and the democracy is behaving badly, according to one's lights, under what sanctions does one exercise one's moral responsibility, and how? Apparently one cannot count on the people, and few indeed of the democrats at the Conference expressed any large trace of such trust, on either an idealistic or empirical basis. But if the people are not to be trusted as a moral resource, where do we put our trust?

Certainly the man seeking such moral direction will get no help from the textbooks in psychology and sociology still being assigned and taught solemnly as "science" in the colleges which many of the conferees taught at or headed. If these books include sections on "morality" or "ethics" at all, they are usually brief and perfunctory. A popular 700-page general textbook on Psychology and Life, for example, intended to "meet the needs of students without sacrificing scientific rigor," devotes one page to "morality" and defines it thus: "To behave morally is to behave in the way that society approves." The public men the conferees complained of as knuckling under to the will and whim of the public were being consistent with what approved social science textbooks taught in their chapters on social adjustment, the nature of mores, the reduction of areas of conflict, and so on.

In plain fact, were not those criticizing public morality most sharply actually reacting *against doctrines of morality implanted firmly in the textbooks by the intellectuals themselves?* If ideas and intellectual syntheses are as important as the calls to these conferences declare, then intellectuals certainly have some kind of moral responsibility for the moral consequences of the ideas being taught as truth to millions of students in social science courses. Further, intellectuals now have different definitions of the moral problem than they did ten or twenty years ago; how did this occur? Do bureaucratized ideas, in their pendulum swings, tend to go further to one extreme and then the other, than the practices of society itself? What does this suggest about the relation of ideas to history?

What is the moral responsibility of intellectuals in the institutionalization of ideas, and whom are they responsible to? And was not this last perhaps the question that a conference of intellectuals concerned with morals in relation to social issues might be expected to direct their interest to, if for no better reasons than their own professional competence and responsibility in the matter?

The conference was not inclined to be introspective and answer such questions, though these were the areas in which intellectuals as such could best reach appropriate moral decisions, as they themselves have always insisted. And indeed is it not on this basis that they have claimed the special freedoms they enjoy to make such decisions, free of all social let or hindrance "from outside"? The reluctance to answer this kind of moral question was evident in the report from the panel on the physical sciences, for example.

The Conference reporter who sat in on the sessions of this panel was amazed at the speed with which it came to a definite agreement. He attributed this to the small number on the panel and the fact that they all spoke the same language and were trained in the same rigorous habits of thought. The scientists agreed that in his scientific researches the scientist should be governed only by scientific rules of procedure and his only purpose should be the discovery of truth. In

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his activities as a citizen, however, he had the same responsibilities as everyone else.

The physical scientists had comparatively little to say, however, about the increasingly important areas in between, where the scientist cooperates with the government and the foundations in directing research projects, especially projects affecting national security. Here is where moral problems quite new to our time occur, and scientists have to deal with them in a dual capacity. In this area scientists cannot departmentalize their lives. They have to act as citizen-scientists. Freedom of research and free dissemination of scientific information may come in conflict with national security or the security of the West as a whole. Freedom for scientists as scientists may come in conflict with the freedom of citizens generally, both individual freedom from bureaucratic encroachments directed by scientists, and freedom from the consequences which might have followed in the power struggle between East and West if certain recommendations of the atomic scientists about sharing the bomb had been carried out. In the educative years since the war, the views of scientists on such matters as giving atomic information to Russia have on the whole changed more rapidly than those of the public, and in the direction of agreement with prevailing non-scientific views.

Of the great harm done scientific projects and scientific morale by the excesses of investigating committees the conference had no doubts. But it was not easy to relate the moral attitude toward the committees to the moral attitude, less frequently and vividly expressed, toward the scientists who had transmitted secrets to the Soviet Union or who had accepted Communists as collaborators in government projects. And it was not clear what, if any, responsibility the scientific community had to take a moral attitude toward the political activities of Urey or Einstein, or toward others within the scientific community who continued to act in terms of ideas which many others had held some years back.

The same uncertainty prevailed in the conference generally. A great deal, very properly, was said about the Congressional investigations and their threat to the democratic process and to individual rights. But there was less interest in the intellectuals' moral responsibility for the totalitarians in their own ranks, or for attitudes in the past which had created such fair game for the committees. At the same time, one noted that there had been a steady change in attitude, especially in the last three or four years, toward the previously presumed rights of the Communist party "as a party like any other" and the presumed rights of individual Communists to secrecy and to moral acceptance. The attitude toward invocation of the Fifth Amendment had changed even within a year. But these changes, one could not help noticing too, had brought the intellectuals closer to the position the public had already held.

## V

THE Conference was not primarily interested, however, in the relation of the intellectuals to the public, or in the way the ideas of the intellectuals had been tested and changed by public events. Such an approach would have a rather too Deweyan flavor. They were looking instead for a stable and determinate set of moral standards by which society could be judged, and on the basis of which some fairly authoritative suggestions for reform could be made.

One would have expected the firmest voices to be those of the clergymen, but they were curiously deferential toward the social scientists. The clergymen praised in general terms the insights and intuitions, the imperatives and absolutes of their traditions or creeds. But they knew that the church in this country did not have a moral effect proportionate to its prestige, its membership, and its divine mission. They knew that in the modern period there were probably fewer who martyred themselves for Christianity than for secular political faiths. They needed the help of the social scientists in making their message work.

One speaker said that the Yale Institute of Alcohol Studies had shown that the

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church's approach to drinking was "irrelevant, shallow, or one-dimensional." Unlike the social scientists, he said, the churches did not have "the data—physiological, sociological, psychological—which would permit them a fairly precise application of moral principles to behavior." Churches could not be effective until they thought more seriously about "empirical testing and validation of moral precepts."

The social scientists, on the other hand, did not seem to feel a similar need for the truths of revealed religion. Though the clergymen used the word "God," the social scientists did not. One of them defined religion simply as man's "orientation to the deeper problems, the deeper uncertainties." Though this might consist of "orientation in terms of God or Gods and a possible afterlife," theism did not significantly affect ethical behavior except as it added "the sanction of fear."

Similar incompatibilities occurred when it seemed necessary to deal with the concrete individual as the source of moral decision. There was general agreement that moral norms could not be established or graded by scientific methods. And there was agreement, though less general, that moral action sometimes required one to go against the norms of society or civil authority or the church. Such action was bound to have personal, intuitive, unconscious sources which distinguished moral action in a democracy or a free society from the self-surrendering obedience philosophically required in a Hegelian-Marxist state. But how could a conference on morals write the prescription for such action or tell how to judge it?

Paul Tillich wrote in his *Systematic Theology:*

"It is the concreteness of our being which makes all our decisions *our* decisions. When I make a decision, it is the concrete totality of everything that constitutes my being which decides, not an epistemological subject. This refers to body structure, psychic strivings, spiritual character. It includes the communities to which I belong, the past unremembered and remembered, the environment which has shaped me, the world which has made an impact on me."

This existentialist sense of the moral individual is hard to deal with at a round-table conference which emphasizes democratic consensus, scientific method, rational solutions. Yet where else but in the uniqueness of the concrete individual, in the ultimately unanalyzable self and its intuitions, can the inner-directedness be found which this eminently other-directed conference so clearly craved? The individual self, to whose dignity so many tributes were paid, was an embarrassment. Not even an empty chair was set aside for him. And yet in a democracy, morality is in constant process of renewal precisely through unpredictable individual acts of self-assertion and self-discovery. The sociologists were quite ready to define *charisma* but not to confront it.

Nor was the conference as a whole existentialist in a Sartrean or dramatic or "engaged" way. There were no stiff-necked or difficult people. No Communists had been invited, or Jehovah's Witnesses, or anti-Communist zealots. No one created a scandal or raised embarrassing questions. The clergymen did not tell the scientists that they were going to Hell, and the scientists did not tell the clergymen that religion was an illusion. In other words, at conferences of this kind devoted to reaffirmations of values, absolutes, the primacy of ideas, men primarily concerned with beliefs and ideas have to act as if they did not believe their beliefs or did not consider it of first importance to affirm them. At best their affirmations had to be relative, conditional, indirect, subordinate to the requirements of the occasion.

This is quite proper, of course, but it has embarrassing ideological implications. Only under these conditions, however, could such a conference be held, bringing together, as it did, men with such utterly incompatible basic convictions. In this it resembled democracy itself, where laws are passed and institutions perfected despite the diversities in belief and taste of the individual citizens.

What those at the conference did have in common, however, was living in a world

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where bishops of the church and captured airmen did or did not yield to Communist pressures and sign false confessions, and in a country where witnesses before Congressional committees did or did not, as their consciences directed, reveal the names of former members of the Communist party, some of whom might or might not prove guilty of crimes like those of Klaus Fuchs or Alger Hiss. As Americans they shared in the responsibility for the execution of the Rosenbergs, for the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, for the war guilt trial of General Yamashita. New kinds of practices were developing in trade unions, in government, in business, which as citizens they accepted or opposed.

But though there was mention of some of these moral novelties and a good deal of general denunciation of the Congressional investigations, there was obvious reluctance to make concrete proposals on immediate issues and announce them publicly. This would have split the body, made matters much too "serious," and seemed pragmatic and limited. The conference preferred to seek first principles, to emphasize standards and values, to reassert, redefine, reformulate.

In the largely unregretted 30's all would have been very different. There would have been organized factions with carefully planned strategy, interventions from the floor, proposed resolutions, demands for changes in procedure, and all the excitements of partisanship as one tendency or another seemed to be carrying the day. Now the participants in this conference of the 50's, despite the moral crisis which had occasioned the conference, seemed quite free of crisis themselves. They were successful men at ease with each other, tolerant and objective.

As responsible American intellectuals, they made an excellent impression. They were candid, modest, serious, witty. They drew richly on their own experiences, usually in important jobs. They were genuinely interested in ideas, and used to expressing them economically and even vividly. This was civilized conversation, the dialectic of the academy at its best. But the notion that it would solve philosophical problems which had not been solved in three thousand years, or provide America with new standards of morality to resolve the crisis of the times, was utterly fantastic.

## VI

Nevertheless, machinery had been set up to summarize the results of the panel discussions. The organizers were determined to fulfill the opening promise to "articulate our basic moral values" and "restate our basic commitments." The chairmen and "conference reporters" at the eight panels described what the panels accomplished. These sixteen reports were then analyzed and interpreted by Richard McKeon, and his interpretation, in turn, was judged by Lyman Bryson.

Meanwhile Rabbi Finkelstein, Mr. Bryson, and Mr. McKeon had prepared a summary statement of several pages to be issued to the press. It was a dizzying series of non-sequiturs. All the generalities and contradictions of the panel sessions became more general and contradictory as they ascended the pyramid. The summary had to satisfy all parties, and at the same time, as a morale-building, democracy-defending public pronouncement, be very American in its optimism and opportunism. "This Conference," it said, "has shown in its various seminars how many avenues for progress in moral standards have been opened through advance in other fields. The continuation of this Conference thus becomes a moral imperative." In fact, the demand for more conferences was perhaps the firmest moral affirmation in the statement. It also said that "it stands to reason that sooner or later we shall have to create a far-flung network of societies dedicated to moral standards." Happily it did not try to imagine how these societies would occupy themselves.

Though they seldom achieve their announced objectives—and indeed show the impossibility of achieving them—conferences on morals or values nearly always come to this conclusion: that it is important to hold another one. And at the next one many of the same people will be present, eager and

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alert and ready to start all over again. If affirming and formulating keeps values alive, then it is obviously essential to keep on affirming and formulating. But what if such conferences prove over and over again that no meaningful formulations can be produced? Why, then, do serious intellectuals, ignoring the record, ignoring the implications of their own behavior at these conferences, continue to attempt at them the intellectually impossible?

Some of the participants have emphatically returned, on the level of ideas at least, to fundamentalism and dogmatism in religion, and in philosophy to various forms of metaphysical idealism, absolutism, or Platonic realism. On the other hand, a large proportion, especially of the social scientists, are still as Deweyan, or positivist, or relativist, or conceptualist, as they would have been in the 20's. Why do these diverse groups continue to meet together in the name of promises of definition and synthesis which they cannot possibly fulfill?

There are, of course, many reasons. If a high-level, publicized, prestige-giving conference is held, it is gratifying to be invited to it. The participants take genuine pleasure in the discussion, the play of ideas. Moreover, though they are often anti-operationalist in their concepts of truth, the conferees do not reach their positions of eminence without being to some extent operators in their professional and public life. And this not in any discreditable way. They are accustomed as a matter of course to thinking in institutional terms, to meeting demands, to reconciling differences, to building and protecting their institutions, to making judicious compromises, to finding rhetorical phrases that match the mood of the times.

The mood of the times demands change without change. Such meetings no longer accept John Dewey's declaration: "The notion that it is possible to get bodies of men to act in accord with finer moral sentiments while the general scheme of social organization remains the same is not only futile, it is a mark of the subtlest form of conceit, moral egotism." There is now a strong resistance to more social change, but a strong desire for change in our attitudes, values, habits, and sense of ourselves. This social conservatism has obvious economic and historical causes. We are economically prosperous, and events since 1939 have made us react excessively against the progressivism and experimentalism of earlier decades. It is fashionable to reject all programmatic attempts to "legislate morals" or "to reform human nature by reforming society." And yet the deep dissatisfaction with the way some things are going in the world, and in the United States, makes it necessary to act.

What then is to be done? As intellectual or moral life is now organized, the first proposal is always to call in the experts and let them thrash out the problem in the free give-and-take of democratic discussion. Inevitably, in the calls to such conferences and in the summaries of their results, all the logical contradictions of this period are painfully manifested. Though morality may be based on unchanging absolutes, or perhaps be a matter ultimately of individual responsibility, the urgency of the world situation and the American flair for organization make some sort of practical, concerted action irresistible. It is suggested that by pooling our individual moralities, we can raise the social moral level. By pooling our ideas, we will create a democratic synthesis.

Individuals are encouraged to get together and merge their differences in the interests of individualism. Unity is demanded in defense of diversity. Pluralists in government are urged to support philosophical monism to insure the survival of democratic pluralism. Absolutists are asked to work out their intellectual differences with relativists in a democratic compromise. The need to reject pragmatism and instrumentalism in favor of a return to absolutes is argued in what sound like instrumentalist or pragmatic terms. The idea that man must be treated as an end and not a means becomes itself a means in ideological warfare. Democratic intellectuals, distrusting the moral potential of the people, look for some more authoritarian guide to public conduct.

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Though these contradictions are historically understandable, does there not lie behind them a fear of the pluralism of ideas and beliefs which is inextricably bound up with the social pluralism of democracy, and which alone makes democratic freedom of choice meaningful? These differing ideas and beliefs do not exist in a realm by themselves, but are held by groups and organizations that promulgate them and defend them and try to carry them into effect. Americans seem now less willing to accept, however, the fact that group disagreements are bound to continue and make difficulties and have results which cannot entirely be foreseen. And yet these risks are also advantages, the very essence of freedom in a democracy. As long as they are kept subordinate to the welfare of society as a whole, such conflicts are creative and life-giving. *Our politics takes its shape from the effort to surmount them or solve them, just as individual morality takes its shape from the effort to surmount or solve parallel conflicts within the self.*

But Americans, or shall we say the American intellectual community, now seem reluctant to believe that the very real changes which have taken place in American society in recent years can be dealt with only by further changes or counter-changes, and that the results can never be fully foreseen. In the present mood experimentalism creates anxiety. The tendency now is to try to deal with social change by marshaling and crystallizing ideas. The ideas are not treated as if they were themselves experimental, but presented as eternal verities. Even while some intellectuals criticize politicians for making us a nation of frightened conformists, they themselves try to set up a philosophic synthesis which, if accepted, would require a far deeper conformism. Even when clerics and intellectuals at a conference find it impossible to define the eternal verities, or to agree on how they can be applied or implemented or put to work, they simply assume that there must be something wrong with their procedures. It does not occur to them that the whole notion of such a project may be undemocratic. They can still cheerfully predict the establishment of "a whole far-flung network of societies devoted to moral standards."

In the attitudes and behavior of the participants, these conferences are basically democratic. They are like the country as a whole. The real strength of democracy in the United States comes from the tough persistence, over two centuries, of democratic habits and independent-mindedness. This is our conservative tradition, which fortunately happens to be liberal in substance.

But ideas are important, too, very important, especially when they get institutionalized. The contradictions of contemporary intellectual life are disturbing just to the extent that we value ideas and need to see things truly. It is painful to find serious intellectuals behaving in such a way as to reduce ideas finally to phrases. They play ideas off against one another in a way that virtually destroys their meaning, instead of putting them into such relationship with causes, consequences, and referents inside and outside the self that their meaning is deepened, renewed, and restored.

The world situation is very difficult, and needs all the intelligence and moral courage that can be brought to bear on it. Intellectuals have a great deal to contribute. But one could wish that they were a little more candid and self-analytical, and applied themselves not only to contradictions in ideas which have not been resolved in three thousand years, but also to contradictions in what they themselves profess publicly to be doing. Conferences might take a few more risks, and tackle some of those problems which our contemporary experience confronts us with, problems which would really test ideas and on which some meaningful decisions might be reached, even at the cost of conflict and practical compromise.

The chimera of democratic synthesis, of agreement on absolutes, leads into deserts of insincerity where all is illusion, where ideas get divorced from meaning and language from life. For intellectuals at a conference on values and morals this might seem of questionable value and even definitely immoral.

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# THE WRETCHED LITTLE DEMON THAT WAS HITLER

## *He Possessed the "Mass Soul" of the Third Reich*

HERBERT LUETHY

IS THE abomination that was Adolf Hitler ripe for the judgment of history? For the moment, the stream of material on him, mostly cheap journalism and gossip, that began pouring forth in Germany after 1945, seems to be drying up; even the most sensational "memoirs" are almost all behind us. And now we have two serious, painstaking, and richly documented biographies issued almost simultaneously, one by an Oxford historian, Alan Bullock, and the other by two Germans, Walter Görlitz and H. A. Quint.* It is a curious experience to read both books together. The same facts and actions are presented, from the same sources, and they lead to the same ineluctable "moral." Yet the tone and attitude of the two books could not be more different.

NOT surprisingly, the Oxford historian maintains a detachment of which Hitler's German biographers are incapable. His book, for this reason, has a precision and unity which their flickering, indistinct, and somewhat lurid portrait lacks. The ghost of the "Führer" still haunts Görlitz and Quint—and they shudder at it in a curious way. We seem to hear them exclaiming at each new turn of events: "What a monster!" or: "Still—what a man!" The exclamation marks they punctuate every second or third sentence with make them sound as if they were trying to make sure the reader felt the "appropriate" emotions. "He opened his heart to no one! Even now there was no friend to whom he trusted himself unreservedly, there was no woman who could have boasted that she ruled him. He feared nothing so much as that. He hid his innermost mystery in absolute darkness until his death!"

Yet in their style and attitude, as well as in their susceptibility to dime-novel "demonism," Görlitz and Quint are unquestionably closer to Hitler than Bullock. This may make their book not only more palatable to German readers but, in an odd, ambiguous way, truer to life insofar as it more closely reflects the atmosphere in which Hitler himself moved. The way Bullock writes about Hitler is perhaps not really possible yet for Germans living in Germany. It's the way a historian would write about Tutankhamen or Nebuchadnezzar—testing his data by traditional standards of evidence, refraining almost completely from judgments, and, above all, trying always to distinguish between opinion and fact—which the two German biographers tend constantly to jumble.

Darkness lies over the first thirty years of Hitler's life, for which we have only a few raw, impersonal facts and some thin, late, and contradictory legends, in part constructed by Hitler himself and in part dutifully propagated by others; but Bullock gives objectively both the darkness and the legends,

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THE "enigma" of Hitler continues to hold the attention of those at least whose memories are longer than the average. If Hitler remains an enigma it is not because of his personality as such; rather because that personality, in all its ineffable tawdriness, was so incommensurate with the events it set in motion. HERBERT LUETHY, a regular contributor to these pages, raises the problem anew on the occasion of the appearance of two full-scale biographies of Hitler, and an English translation of a selection from his recorded "table talk"; and he focuses particularly on the impulse of the German biographers to find still some element of "greatness" in the "Führer." Mr. Luethy was born and brought up in Switzerland, and is a literary critic as well as political commentator, his latest book being on Montaigne. His last appearance in COMMENTARY was in January 1953, with an article on the contemporary developments tending toward a united Europe. The present article was translated from the German by Irving Pfefferblit.

**Hitler, A Study in Tyranny.* Harper. 776 pp. $6.00; *Adolf Hitler, Eine Biographie.* Stuttgart. Steingrüben-Verlag. 656 pp.



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even down to the unlikeliest minutiae. Hitler tells in *Mein Kampf* how as a little boy in Leonding he was always the leader when playing at war with the other boys, and a few old neighbors are supposed later—decades after the event, when Hitler was already great and powerful and such memories were worth their weight in gold—to have confirmed this. "Yes, we remember. What a daredevil that Hitler was!" Was he really? Görlitz and Quint write: "On the hill opposite the Leonding church, and in the meadow behind the family house, the village children played at Boers and Englishmen. Hitler led the Boers, and the English were beaten!" Bullock notes dryly: "He has been described as the natural leader of the children in their games—which may or may not be true." This is the difference between a history and a biographical novel.

THERE are even more significant differences between the two books. Every time the Nazis perpetrate a crime, Görlitz and Quint fall prey to tormenting doubts: did the "Führer" himself know about it? The Reichstag fire, for instance—it came at just the right time, a real gift from the gods, it was exploited "with lightning swiftness" to suspend all constitutional freedoms and create an atmosphere of terror. The official explanation of the new Nazi regime, that it was a Communist plot, was a fabrication from beginning to end, but *concocted with genius,* according to Görlitz and Quint, who also write that "the suspicion exists" that the SA "had a hand in the game," and even raise the "insoluble question, still, of when Goering noticed that not everything about this act of arson was open and aboveboard . . . something that the party state could naturally never admit!" So Görlitz and Quint are left *in doubt.* The Nazi putsch in Austria and the murder of Chancellor Dollfuss? Hitler "dissociated himself" from these acts "in the sharpest possible manner"—"lightning quick." The mass murders of June 30, 1934? In this exceptional case, to be sure, Hitler himself led a murder squad, but "Hitler sincerely believed then, we must grant him, that the SA intended a putsch." This "we must grant him" is worth a whole library.

There is no question here, however, of special pleading. That it was the spirit of Hitler himself that engulfed Germany, and later Europe, is stressed over and over by the two German authors—but we have been transported imperceptibly from the level of personality to that of "spirit," where things are less crude and no longer reek of blood. And if the source and origin of these events is historically perfectly clear, Görlitz and Quint are nevertheless quite right from a legal point of view: there is no documentary evidence—it was in every case carefully destroyed, the witnesses, most of them, along with it—and throughout his life Hitler trusted himself just as little to paper as he did to any human being. Nothing can be proved about Hitler, for good or for evil, from his birth to his death.

Nothing personal can be proved against him—and nothing personally meaningful either. He spoke in clichés and "eternal verities," literally "like a book," always alone, always holding a pose—before conversational partners as before audiences. The man who stamped his image on a whole epoch—an epoch that resembled him anyhow—had no image himself: only a mask, stuck together out of a mustache and a forelock, which he hid in his hands whenever he laughed, because laughter did not fit with the stance of wild energy that he maintained so fiercely. The poor devil from Leonding, the unsuccessful high school student of Linz, the unsuccessful bohemian of Vienna, down and out, without home or family, without profession or calling, and soon, indeed, stateless, without wife, sweetheart, friend, or comrade, finally rose in the world: through politics, the ideal vocation of the vocationless, of the man who concerns himself with what does not concern him, and can devote unlimited time to it because he himself has nothing that concerns him personally; who, for lack of a destiny of his own, becomes the master of the destiny of his society, and who can wrap himself so tightly in a pose because he possesses nothing else. And yet, on the heights of power, Hitler remained the same poor devil. In the very center of mighty events set in motion from that center itself, there stood a being of almost inconceivable spiritual, moral, and human inferiority.

IT IS understandable enough that Hitler's political opponents should always have seen him, until it was too late, as a mere tool, whether of the Reichswehr, the Junkers,

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or heavy industry. It was an error; he was no tool, even if his entire career is unthinkable without the scheming officers of the post-1918 German army, who set him loose on Germany as a nationalist agitator and information agent; or without the dark ferment of Bavarian conspiracies, beer-hall putschists, vigilante tribunals, and the Freikorps; or without the protection and complicity of highly placed "nationalist" politicians, from the Munich police commissioner and a Bavarian minister of justice to the Ludendorff clique and the "black Reichswehr," under whose protection this promoter of riots, organizer of meeting-hall brawls, and putschist, who did not even become a German citizen until 1932, remained safe from punishment or deportation; or without the Kahrs, Thyssens, Hugenbergs, and Papens, who thought they could use him as a "drummer boy."

But not only Hitler's enemies, also those who came to terms with him made the mistake of regarding him as a mere tool. "The history of Hitler is the history of his underestimation," observes Veit Valentin, in his *History of the Germans*—and he is quoted approvingly by Görlitz and Quint. They seek to avoid that error.

But what was it that was underestimated in Hitler? Wherein did his power lie? "Every single one of his ideas," Bullock notes, "from the exaltation of the heroic leader, the racial myth, anti-Semitism, the community of the *Volk,* and the attack on the intellect, to the idea of a ruling elite, the subordination of the individual and the doctrine that might is right, is to be found in anti-rational and racist writers (not only in Germany but also in France and other European countries) during the hundred years which separate the Romantic movement from the foundation of the Third Reich. By 1914 they had become the stale commonplaces of radical anti-Semitic and pan-German journalism and café-talk in every city in Central Europe. . . .

"Hitler's originality lay not in his ideas, but in the terrifying literal way in which he set to work to translate fantasy into reality, and his unequalled grasp of the means by which to do this. To read Hitler's table talk at his headquarters in 1941-1942 is to feel continual astonishment at the lack of magnanimity and wisdom in his conversation, the main qualities of which were cunning and brutality, a cocksure ignorance and an ineradicable vulgarity. Yet this vulgarity of mind, like the insignificance of his appearance, the badly fitting raincoat and the lock of hair plastered over his forehead, was perfectly compatible with brilliant political gifts. Accustomed to associate such gifts with the qualities of intellect which a Napoleon or a Bismarck possessed, or with the strength of character of a Cromwell or a Lincoln, we are astonished and offended by this combination. Yet to underestimate Hitler as a politician, to dismiss him as an hysterical demagogue, is to make precisely the mistake that so many Germans made in the early 1930's."

THE danger of underestimating him no longer seems very great. Even those who once found this black-haired apostle of the blond Aryan hero comic have long since stopped laughing. "If you would see his monument, look around." And, all things considered, it was not primarily an error of underestimation that the German people committed as regards Hitler. On the contrary. The problem Hitler's German biographers struggle with is quite different: how to reconcile the gravity, the catastrophic magnitude of the events, with the vulgar mediocrity of the individual who initiated them; and, if not to explain this, at least to make it conceivable how a great and civilized nation could identify itself with a spiritually and morally retarded being. Their constant harping on the necessity of taking Hitler seriously is the measure of their failure in this. What kind of biography is it that halts its narrative every few pages to insist that there really is something to the man it depicts, even if it is impossible to discern just what it is?

Often the effort to "take Hitler seriously" becomes grotesque. Thus Görlitz and Quint say, in connection with Hitler's early rejection of Marx and Marxism, that he had undoubtedly read not Marx himself but, at most, "pamphlets about or against Marxism." But a few pages later—after voicing their own commonplace notions about the place of Marxism in the philosophy of history—they note ponderously that "Hitler, however, rejected it [Marxism] not so much from the standpoint of pure historical theory as from that of racism, as 'Jewish science'. . . . By so doing, he, unquestionably one of the most important of anti-Marxists, turned the tables

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on it, and in exchange made the racial interpretation of history by his own act a universally valid absolute." The reader groans at this point. All this man, who was "unquestionably" one of the most important of anti-Marxists, knew about Karl Marx, that great and genuinely difficult thinker, he knew by hearsay—that is, that he was a Jew. And he "refuted" the Marxist analysis of society and its critique of history with "Death to the Jew!"—"not so much," therefore, "from the standpoint of pure historical theory." The superstition that tremendous historical events have to have spiritual, high-minded causes—that a man who greatly affected the destiny of nations must needs himself be great—here reaches its ultimate effect in a monstrous confusion of values and categories.

WHAT seems to be the insuperable difficulty incurred by both these conscientious biographies of Hitler is to find the category of historical greatness into which to fit him. "Greatness" itself is unquestionable, for Hitler's "greatness" left as its monument one of the greatest shambles in history; nothing more is required to put a man in the schoolbooks, and a great deal has gone into history, from the arsonist of Ephesus to the Capitoline geese. Moreover, Hitler's public role is well known, the available sources for the history of National Socialism are richer than those for most other epochs of history. But this contributes very little to his personal biography; in the face of "Hitler the man," the verifiable sources dry up, the image grows cloudy, all the outlines of an articulated personality disappear. How every reality of Hitler, the man, resists all efforts to lend him greatness!

The greatest advantage these new biographies of Hitler have over the one written by Konrad Heiden in the 1930's, which still has its value today and is hardly surpassed for the period it covers, is in their last chapters, which cover events Heiden did not yet have the chance to observe. In Bullock's book, the last chapter is entitled "The Emperor without His Clothes," and tells about the madhouse that was Hitler's bunker in April 1945: the widening gap between Hitler's private world and reality; his last months as Supreme War Commander; his operations with phantom armies; his wild commands, issued into the void, for offensives, dismissals, death sentences; his insane outbursts against anyone who wanted to halt the collective suicide of Germany. Long before this, Hitler had uttered the following sentence (variations of which recur over and over in his conversation) in his last public speech in Munich on November 9, 1943—a sentence hurriedly expunged from the official versions: "I will not mourn for the German people if they fail this test. . . ."

This, its final stage, made his whole career all the more inconceivable. How did this mythomaniac acquire the power to force his delusions on reality for so many years, and make a whole nation follow him so obediently into the abyss?

Bullock finds Hitler's place in history "alongside Attila the Hun, the barbarian king who was surnamed not the Great, but the Scourge of God," and Görlitz and Quint, with the cautious reservation that "it is not for us to make the final historical judgment," come to the same conclusion. But this all too convenient parallel can, at best, do justice only to the external scale of the catastrophe, not to Hitler's personality. Whatever he was, there was nothing primitive, natural, or elemental about him, nothing of the uncomplicated barbarism of a nomad chief. To see him as a wild, unchained force of nature is to fall for his own pose. This "Scourge of God" fell upon Europe not out of the steppes but from the Viennese gutter.

What is missing from both biographies is the peculiar, penetrating smell—"demoniacally" thrilling to some, repellent to others—that the whole Nazi movement exhaled in the years of its ascendancy. No one thinks of the category "genius" in connection with Attila or Genghis Khan; with Hitler it is impossible to avoid the word, which in almost every language other than German can denote the bad as well as the good, the highest as well as the lowest spirit that can possess men—or swine. And unsatisfactory as is that demonology which takes over the task of explaining what the rational understanding still cannot, it unquestionably comes closer to the phenomenon of Hitler than the notion of barbarism. "Schicklgruber, possessed by demons"—as unspeakably vulgar as it sounds, that is the correct starting point. Not Attila, but the villain of a *Dracula*-type thriller best approximates Hitler as a historical figure; his band of "old fighters"—that chosen col-

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lection of pederasts, drug addicts, rowdies, crackpots, and criminals—belong with some nest of vampires rather than a barbarian horde.

HISTORIANS do not want to descend to the level of popular magazines, of scandal and sensation; they are used to other references. But how else can they reach Adolf Hitler's level? It is hard for history to move on a higher plane than its subject, and everything private in Hitler's life is doubtful, sordid, or disreputable.

The problem presents itself on the first page of every biography of Hitler. "On the 6th of June, 1876, there appeared before the notary in Weitra-an-der-Lainsitz, in the department of Gmund in Lower Austria, an eighty-four-year-old former miller named Johann Georg Hiedler, who, in the presence of three witnesses . . . declared that the customs officer Alois Schicklgruber, born out of wedlock on June 17, 1837, in Strones, to the serving-maid Anna Maria Schicklgruber, whom he [Hiedler] had married in 1842, was his own and the said serving-maid's natural son. . . ." Alois Schicklgruber was forty years old, had already been married and divorced, and had two children by his cook when he was thus legitimized. Johann Hiedler had married Alois's mother thirty-five years before, but had not bothered then to recognize his illegimate son, and never bothered about him after his wife's death five years later. Furthermore, he, Hiedler, dropped out of sight during the intervening thirty years. It was the sort of thing that often happened among peasants.

Alan Bullock tactfully ignores the whole thing: what has it got to do with the case? Yet it is pertinent that the apostle of the myth of race, who made blood origin the sole criterion of humanity, did not really know who his own grandfather was. It is equally pertinent that the son of the Jewish family in Graz by whom Anna Maria Schicklgruber was employed at the time of her confinement contributed to the support of her son Alois for twenty years—the Alois who was Hitler's father, and whom Hitler hated with a hatred he could not hide even in *Mein Kampf*, with a hatred that led him to rebel against all authority, all discipline, and every ordered way of life, and decided him upon his abortive "artistic career." And it is also pertinent that a ragged Viennese postcard-painter, Adolf Hitler, in an old black, knee-length coat a secondhand dealer had given him, with long black hair and sparse unshaven beard, really looked exactly the way he later, in *Mein Kampf*, described "the Jew in a caftan" whose sight had such a traumatic effect upon him. Those who have tried to come to grips with Hitler's "doctrine" were long ago struck by the fact that he always projected his own image upon those he hated and excoriated. We will build no theory on this, and we also prefer to leave his hidden origins hidden.

But what's the use, then, of the genealogical tables that Görlitz and Quint print, only, finally, to "concede" what is obvious anyway, that "in Adolf Hitler's physiognomy very little of German ancestry is to be seen"? This is taking a tone too lofty for the subject. The *homo alpinus*, with his black lock of hair over a slanting forehead, flanked by his little Mephisto Goebbels, as herald of the Nordic hero—only naked horror blinds us to the ludicrousness of this burlesque-hall act. Does *everything* about Hitler really have to be "taken seriously" because his Reich cost twenty-five million lives?

BUT we do not need gossip, revelations, or explanations of the "Geli Raubal affair," or the intimate diaries of Eva Braun, to clear up Hitler's case. His true, authorized, and incontestable portrait was painted by himself in *Mein Kampf* and no biography, however painstaking and conscientious, can replace the reading of that book for anyone seeking to grasp his personality. *Mein Kampf*, which was once thrust into almost every German's hands, seems to have been read by few, and to the end by even fewer.

That the book teems with gross untruths and even worse half-truths does not prevent it from mirroring the spiritual personality of its author with alarming if involuntary truthfulness. Nor does it matter that it depicts the external circumstances of Hitler's career with vague, obliterating, or self-glorifying strokes—about the first thirty years of his life Hitler juggled with one contradictory and obviously untenable version after another, until in the *Reichshandbuch der Deutschen Gesellschaft* the notice he himself wrote states that, as the "descendant of an Austrian family of finance officials," he "de-

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voted himself to architecture" during his youth in Vienna, and in 1912 moved to Munich "in order to find a wider field for his political activity." Even the style, decked out with stilted flourishes and padded with verbiage, distends itself as it spreads its sorry "world view," like a peacock's tail, over 800 pages. But the spirit expressed in this ideological portrait of himself is his own, unmistakable amid all the rubbish.

MANY of the questions that his biographers wrestle with disappear as soon as we go to *Mein Kampf*. All the deliberations and conjectures about his education, the "enormous reading" of his bohemian period in Vienna, then become meaningless. Did he read Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Mommsen, Le Bon, Gobineau, Chamberlain, Haeckel? We do not know; Hitler himself avoided every mention of the names of all the authors he supposedly had read. The few shopworn quotations from great writers that sprinkle his writings and speeches were on every tongue, and could have come to him at fourth or fifth hand. He took from everything—as he noted complacently—what suited him.

As sole "philosophic" foundation, sufficient alike for stockbreeding, the animal kingdom, and the life of nations, he had a primitive biological Darwinism, expressed in pseudo-scientific vulgarizations. He showed an abysmal lack of understanding of anything having to do with society, morality, government, civilization, or religion—in short, of anything human higher than the pack. His knowledge of the world was that of a village grumbler whose information was all got from the local newspaper. And under all this there lay an arbitrary belief in force such as required no extensive reading to attain—but with which one could go far. This is the whole intellectually graspable content of Hitler's picture of the world.

For long stretches that picture is nothing but the blustering of a barroom debater who knows how to do everything better because he doesn't know how to do anything. Yet, though—or precisely because—Hitler had little systematic understanding of any question involving factors more complicated than those of force or cunning, ideas occurred to him such as seldom occur to serious statesmen and diplomats because they are excluded by experience or respect for the rules of the game. The Gordian knot and Columbus's egg are standing examples of the fact that the simplest solution of a difficult problem is always by force and cunning—stand an egg on end by breaking it, and untie a knot by cutting it. It is not a difficult trick, anybody can do it; but it is successful because nobody else does do it. However, such success seldom outlasts the effect of its surprise. Adolf Hitler went from one stupendous triumph to another, making German and then world history, until all the eggs were broken and all the knots cut—then, to his amazement, the others, "those idiots," turned and fought.

But it was not in his methods, which others had discovered and practiced before him, that Hitler's originality lay; rather in the "demonic possessedness" with which, a nonentity out of nothingness, he began his mad career, swept millions along with him, and landed them and himself in utter catastrophe. Barroom debaters, even the brawling kind, do not usually have anything demonic about them, and are generally burdened with private lives that limit the time available for world conquest. This political tub-thumping, even though Hitler obviously takes it very seriously himself, is still mere frosting, like the pseudo-scientific learning that pornographic literature used to dress itself up in—and which was likewise often taken very seriously by the pornographers themselves. What is really and truly "demonic" about Hitler's wild, bloated effusions is not his political "views," his "world-historical" ruminations, or his nationalism, his arrogance, and his belief in force: but rather a reek of obscenity, of degenerate and perverted lewdness, that almost hits the reader of *Mein Kampf* in the face.

WHEN Hitler starts talking about "race" and "blood" every attempt at even the most primitive kind of rational argument ends, and he lapses into the language of sexual hallucination. To each his own: French literature has the Marquis de Sade; German literature, *Mein Kampf*. Its obsessive theme is embodied in the image of the black-haired demon and the blond virgin—the repressed wish-fulfillment dream of an unhappy adolescence. This nightmare of sex became the fixed point around which Hitler's image of the world revolved. His sick imagination saw nothing else during his years

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in Vienna; later, the nightmare spread to become a glacial cap of madness covering the whole world.

One would have to quote endlessly from Hitler's remarks on syphilis, education, the tasks of the racist state, to grasp the whole clinical picture. He was a sick man for whom woman and sex remained always in the realm of sinful fantasy. If you want to find out Hitler's "mystery" or his wretched "demon," here it is, drawn by Hitler himself.

Hitler's central political idea is a vulgar rationalization of a sexual hallucination, an insane vision in which history, politics, and "the life struggle of races" unroll in images of copulation, promiscuity, blood defilement, natural selection, cross-breeding, bastardization, rape, and abduction—world history as a sexual orgy in which filthy and diabolic subhumans lie in wait for blond maidens.

HITLER was thirty-five when he dictated *Mein Kampf*. When his "Table Talk"* was recorded, he was over fifty, the absolute dictator and supreme war commander of a country he had led into a war against the whole world—and yet nothing had really changed. True, the need to rationalize had now become dominant, and the telegraphic style in which his party comrade, Dr. Picker, recorded his utterances makes it impossible to taste the full flavor of his fantasies. But more than ever is human history seen in the context of a Darwinian animal world. "In reply to an objection by Reich Press Chief Dietrich, the Führer said: 'What is true of the wild horses is true of every community of living creatures that wishes to maintain itself in the world. If there is no bellwether the community is dissolved, atomized—everything comes to an end. It is for this reason that the apes, for example, trampled outsiders to death as aliens. And what is valid for the apes must be even more valid for human beings.' "

Hitler notes with satisfaction that the "quality" of the children around Berchtesgaden had already "improved" substantially thanks to the "blood-freshening" activities of a division of the SS stationed there, who "take their task of bringing children into the world as a racial duty." "It is a practice which must be followed; to those districts in which a tendency towards degeneracy is apparent, we must send a body of elite troops, and in ten or twenty years' time the bloodstock will be improved out of all recognition." "In life, battle and love go hand in hand, and the inhibited little bourgeois must be content with the crumbs which remain." On the other hand, he noted with regret that the northern French had been perceptibly "Nordicized" by the occupation of their territory by German soldiers during the First World War; precious German blood should not be injected into alien races and allowed to filter up into their "leadership strata." This was the level on which things were discussed at Hitler's headquarters; ideas that should have remained lavatory jokes parade as eternal truths and divine revelation.

The fantasies of *Mein Kampf* had by now hardened into a systematic delirium. The "Table Talk" fully confirms what Rauschning, ten years before, had reported of Hitler's "secret teachings" about the "breeding of the superman." Publicly, Hitler had always spoken as if he considered the German people "Aryan," but within the circle of his worshippers he revealed the dark secret that the "Aryan" no longer existed—or perhaps not yet; he would have to be created by Hitler's personal intervention in a bungled Creation; state-directed biological mutations, "forced breeding," as animal-breeder Darré said, would be necessary. Their "Nordic essence" was to be extracted from the European peoples that lent themselves to the process. Eastern Europe and Russia were to be excluded from this forced "upward breeding," and illiteracy, plague, and poverty were to kill off superfluous slave populations to make room for the brave new asphalt world of the Nordic race. This was the deeper meaning, which Hitler alone perceived, of a war that was to mark a turning point in world history.

THE sources from which Hitler drew the materials for this monstrous structure lie in the past, and they have been distorted almost beyond recognition. All of German Romanticism, with its "instinctive" and

**Hitler's Secret Conversations 1941-1944.* With an Introductory Essay by H. R. Trevor-Roper. Farrar, Straus and Young, 597 pp., $6.50. This selection overlaps with, but is somewhat different from that published in the original German which Francis Golffing reviewed in these pages in February 1953.

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"blood" definitions of race, nation, and culture—a whole tradition of operatic Germanness—emptied itself into this spiritual swamp.

Nor did these pathological fantasies remain mere theory; in Auschwitz and Maidanek the "final solution of the Jewish question" was "achieved" in millionfold murder. The euthanasia program for the extermination of the mentally ill, and of "inferior" human specimens in general, was set in motion by Hitler's decree on the first day of the war; in the conquered territories of the East the *Einsatzgruppen* set out to exterminate or tread down "slave peoples" with systematic brutality. The Race and Resettlement Bureau of the SS catalogued with pedantic minuteness the breeding value (estimated down to decimal points) of hundreds of thousands of "resettled" people who were to be employed for racial breeding in the "German resettlement area"; in Poland, Holland, and Norway the rounding up had already begun of those whose blood was considered suitable for the same purpose in Himmler's proposed new German cities. Never did lunacy become world history on such a scale.

HITLER'S early life was that of a lonely, orphaned, unhappy, rootless man, unsuccessful in every human sphere, who had never found a single healthy or genuine human contact, or a task or milieu of his own; who, in his own growing isolation from humanity, refused, out of anxiety, to show himself to anyone except in the pose of a lonely and misunderstood genius. This panicky refusal to meet anyone on an equal plane without posturing, his systematic avoidance of all confrontation, discussion, examination, or self-examination, the flight from himself into an unreal world of uninterrupted monologues where he could hide his inner emptiness—all this remained with Hitler until the end of his life.

He had thanked God on his knees for the coming of war in 1914, but here, too, the political reasons he cites are grotesque and twisted rationalizations of a purely personal joy in the arrival of a "mass experience" that would at last give his life some meaning. But even this "mass experience" remained as inwardly empty as the clichés to which his description of this "greatest and most unforgettable time of my earthly life," besides which "everything in the past was reduced to mere nothingness," are limited. In the trenches too he sat apart, as once he had sat "somewhere apart," as he himself said, among the Viennese building workers at the midday break. The other soldiers had homes, families, wives, wrote and received letters, yearned for their old lives—he had no one, and his outburst of rage in *Mein Kampf* against the "foolish letters of the German women" which "demoralized the front," "this poison manufactured by thoughtless wives at home," is laden with hate and envy. For him—homeless, without real education or calling, without a goal—civilian life meant a return to nothingness. What was he good for? In ordinary times, perhaps, he could have become preacher of some eccentric sect (even in his last years, between critical military decisions, he would long-windedly lecture his entourage on vegetarianism, the harmfulness of alcohol and tobacco, and Hörbiger's theories about the glacial age). But these were not ordinary times. The age of the scabrous bohemian hero had dawned, the age of the *ratés*, of the failures.

IN THE slowly dissolving German army in post-Armistice Munich, commanded by Republic-hating officers who were later to make up the *Freikorps*, all the irreconcilables, at odds with God and the world and thirsting for national revenge, tried to scrape along in a provisional military life. Here the discharged Adolf Hitler, who did not know what was to become of him, likewise nursed his resentment and despair. In a course on "national thinking" organized on the initiative of Captain Roehm, he found his political finishing school; one need look no further for the sources of his "doctrines," even if he himself, in *Mein Kampf*, dates his political enlightenment a decade or two back. Here, in the company of men of like fate and outlook, he acquired the whole arsenal of nationalist slogans he was to draw on for the rest of his career: the "stab-in-the-back" lie, the betrayal by the "Jewish-Marxist November criminals," the "shame of Versailles," "racial thinking"—the whole set of inflammatory platitudes of the extreme German right.

In this hothouse atmosphere his hour ripened. At last, in a discussion in which "one of the participants thought it necessary to break a lance for the Jews," the spirit

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came upon him, and "aroused," he uttered aloud that hatred of the Jewish "corrupter of the people" which had fermented within him for so long. The audience, the atmosphere, the theme—everything came together. What was lowest in him poured forth, and it spoke to what was lowest in his listeners; the contact was made—he was a speaker! His talent had been discovered. "The result . . . was that I was assigned, a few days later, to serve as a so-called 'educational officer' with a Munich regiment."

In his capacity as nationalist propagandist among troops, and as "information agent" for what was to become the "Black Reichswehr," he was sent as a political observer to a meeting of the newly founded German Workers party, one of the extremist nationalist organizations then springing up like mushrooms from the soil of Munich, and with his oratorical conquest of its seven members, Hitler began his conquest of the world. The remaining twenty years of his life were to be one long monologue before a slowly swelling audience, a monologue half-German, screaming, inarticulate, but aimed unerringly at every evil instinct in his fellow men. With jubilation, he noted the effect of his first public speech before an audience of one hundred and eleven people: "What I had before simply felt internally, without knowing it in any way, had now been proved by reality: I could speak! After thirty minutes the people in the little room had been electrified. . . ."

From this to the mass frenzies of Nuremberg, the rest of Hitler's career is one single, continuous intensification of this orgy of mass oratory, the first and only form of human contact he had ever known, and to which, when he had once tasted it, he returned obsessively like an addict to his drug. He had nothing but his burning hatred and his pathological obsessions, but it was clear now that this was enough to bring under his spell hundreds, then thousands, then hundreds of thousands of others who likewise possessed nothing else. He, who possessed no one, could possess masses; he, who could not deal with his fellow man as an individual, could "electrify" him as part of a crowd, dehumanize him, work him up into raving excitement and (in his own words) "forward-driving hysteria."

The mass meeting became the realization of his fantasies, the witches' sabbath over which he ruled, released at last from the inner prison of his individuality and carried away by the mass delirium he himself evoked. The first audiences he addressed had been composed only of men; now the women came, too, the elderly, "motherly friends" who introduced the unmannerly "little wolf" to society, the hysterical hero-worshippers who instinctively divined the little boy imprisoned within the great man; the "convulsion squad" of the mass meetings, whom his presence sent into hysterical fits.

What Hitler said hardly mattered and he learned quickly, indeed, to alter his rationalizations according to his audience. A torrent of pathologically erotic hatred, with dark affect-laden verbal symbols—"disgrace," "blood," "shame," "Jew," "race," "sin"—washed over his audience and transformed it into a mass bereft of its senses.

He talked himself into fame, he talked himself into power, he talked himself into war, and he talked himself into disaster. Did he know what he was doing? Nowhere can it be shown that his political aims, his ideas about the future, consisted of anything but the marching, the *heil*ing, the flags and the torches of the huge crowds straining up to him. And as the last event in the program of delirium, there came the vision of a collectively organized procreation of the Nordic superman out of test tubes of sacred blood, a vision embodied in the elite columns of the SS as they marched in to the strains of *Parsifal*. His speeches during the second half of the war, with Germany already on the slope of catastrophe, show an absolute incapacity to see the world war he had called down upon Germany in any other perspective but that of his early struggles and oratorical triumphs, the meeting-hall brawls and the election campaigns in which he by fanatical energy—ten or more election speeches a day—had first shown his power.

Just as all the terms he, and his admirers, found for his special talent for mass suggestion—sleepwalking, hypnosis, animal magnetism—point towards the realm of hysteria, so his career, magnified by the power he wielded, reminds one of a hysterical woman who, having once discovered she could always get her way by nervous attacks and fits of screaming, forever afterwards responds

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to all contradiction or resistance with a nervous collapse. Hitler's tantrums were worked up and heightened systematically once experience had demonstrated their effect; they were synthetic, consciously induced. The fit of rage turned on and off at will, the rug-chewing became an instrument to be manipulated, a weapon in the struggle for power within the party, a diplomatic arm, finally a weapon to be used in the supreme direction of war—and even in the disastrous last months of his life, he found that these fits of rage which no one dared contradict could make possible, if not the impossible, then at least the insane. (What he spoke came to pass: the national revolution, the Greater German Reich, the subjugation of Europe, the pogroms, the massacres, the downfall of the world—the world around him became putty in his hands, and confirmed his madness.) Perhaps Hitler's real biography is nothing but this single, endless, obsessive monologue, a waking dream outside real life, and outside what had hitherto been called history. When he was not making a speech he fell back into a brooding half-sleep, abandoned by the demon, incapable of action or decision, buried in himself—*post coitum triste*. Perhaps that discrepancy with which his biographers struggle—between the monstrous shadow he cast over world history and the person that produced it—is nothing but the discrepancy between a medium's state of excitement and his relapse into the apathy of his own insignificant individuality.

But here the problem of Hitler ends, and becomes the problem of the materials out of which he built his empire.

Hitler did not create the "mass soul" that gave itself up to him; it fell to him because he was made in its image. Certainly, all the external conditions for this explosion of failure, rootlessness, and long-fermented hatred were already present in Germany and Germans: the collapse of the Kaiser's Reich, the great lie of the "stab in the back" that from the beginning poisoned the development of the Weimar Republic, the smoldering atmosphere of chauvinist conspiracy, the inflation, the declassing of the middle classes, the Great Depression and its despair, the secret jockeying for power amid political chaos. These are recorded in both biographies with great and depressing conscientiousness. As Bullock rightly points out in his "Epilogue": "Hitler, indeed, was a European, no less than a German phenomenon. The conditions and the state of mind which he exploited, the *malaise* of which he was the symptom, were not confined to one country, although they were more strongly marked in Germany than anywhere else. . . . He was in revolt against 'the System' not just in Germany but in Europe, against that liberal bourgeois order, symbolized for him in the Vienna which had once rejected him. To destroy this was his mission, the mission in which he never ceased to believe; and in this, the most deeply felt of his purposes, he did not fail. . . ."

European in this sense all the epiphenomena of the Third Reich—the crisis of society and civilization, the "masses," the total state, the nihilism—certainly were. Nonetheless, it would be idle to attempt to argue away the unmistakable *Germanness* of the phenomenon of Adolf Hitler and of the specific spirit he stamped on his Reich, that sick, obscene savagery which had no parallel in Fascism, Bolshevism, or any of the other totalitarian movements. The foul instincts that Hitler's blood cult conjured to the surface rose from the depths of a sour, spectral, airless, brooding psyche, and that psyche was an aspect peculiar to the "German nature" to which Hitler could appeal with such murderous success—an aspect the rest of the world viewed with startled incomprehension.

The Third Reich contained other impulses besides this nightmare. Once set in motion, it had the force to move unswervingly to a repetition, ten times as disastrous, of the First World War—but it was not in this that the ghastly originality of Hitler's Third Reich lay. The elevation of certain depraved fantasies—diseased products of a sick mind such as could conceive Auschwitz, Maidanek, and the human stock-breeding files of the Bureau of Race and Resettlement—into the official philosophy of a civilized nation: this was what was original and unique in Hitler's achievement. It was this that marked an absolute zero in human history, far below all barbarism, below all horrors and crimes of war and revolution, below Stalin's slave camps. The nightmare has vanished, but who can wonder that its neighbors and witnesses still feel the horror of it in their bones?

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# WESTERN ALTERNATIVE FOR "BACKWARD PEOPLES"

## *Modernization Through Benevolent Intervention*

G. L. ARNOLD

THROUGHOUT the greater part of the world, the chief political issue today is whether Communists or non-Communists will direct those revolutionary movements of backward countries which have for their aim a radical break with the pre-industrial past. We mean economic and social transformations similar to those which Western Europe and North America effected in the course of their history, and which Eastern Europe has been trying to effect during the past century.

Continuing Europe's historic work of reconstructing traditional society, it is Western technology, Western organization, even some aspects of Western thought, that the revolutionaries of Eastern Europe and the Far East are trying to impose. In this struggle, we witness ideas and values derived from Western experience being utilized, though usually altered, inverted, and turned against their originators. Thus we have the spectacle of Russians and Chinese conducting their anti-Western campaigns under the banner of Marxian socialism; Indian orators quoting Gladstone and the Webbs; Arab nationalists employing the vocabulary of the French Revolution to justify secession from France; and Latin American demagogues appealing to Jefferson and Lincoln in support of the latest propaganda drive against the United States.

What accounts for this perversion by which Western ideas and aspirations are turned against the West? It comes about when the revolutionaries are faced with the problem of imposing Western forms and possibilities on people still living under primitive conditions. Such radical leaders, finding themselves confronted with traditional, stagnant societies, impoverished peasantries, corrupt bureaucracies, petrified cultures, easily fall prey to the Stalinist myth of the October Revolution which promises a short-cut through this tangle of obstacles. Democracy, unhappily, seems to offer no comparable method of refashioning society, and for the "professional revolutionaries" of the intelligentsia, impatient with the thick layers of ignorance, passivity, and cultural backwardness of the masses, dictatorship holds many attractions. The movement, from being revolutionary, becomes dictatorial and finally totalitarian. And under present circumstances, this usually means joining the Soviet camp.

THUS the basis is laid by which the Soviet regime—despite its political and technical backwardness, and the low level of its intellectual culture, by Marxist standards or any others—is able to exploit the historic cleavage between Western and Eastern societies, which corresponds and runs parallel to the conflict of interest between industrial and agricultural countries. It is aided in this by the fact that Sovietism is itself the offspring of a revolution resulting from the im-

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G. L. ARNOLD addresses himself here to the central dilemma that has confronted the West in its efforts to help "backward peoples" achieve the economic and social transformation towards which they are driving. Himself a firm adherent of the British Labor tradition, Mr. Arnold offers a way out that will startle many who subscribe to the liberal-labor faith in a "backward nation" program of land reform, progressive recasting of income tax, and the granting of large funds for industrial reconstruction—"with no strings attached." This "hands-off" policy simply won't achieve the economic and social ends desired, Mr. Arnold argues; some form of centralized political control under the reins of "foreign" power is a *sine qua non*; and if the West doesn't step in, the Soviets will, installing a rule which destroys all liberties without achieving economic progress. Understanding why this is so—and what forms control may properly take—thus becomes the real problem; and it is to this that Mr. Arnold then devotes his attention. Mr. Arnold is an editor of the British monthly *Twentieth Century*.



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pact of Western ideas and techniques upon a society closer in some respects to the East than to Europe. The breakdown of 1917 resulted from an abortive attempt to modernize traditional Russian society on Western lines, and the regime to which it gave rise combines modern techniques with the political methods of the great Oriental despotisms of the past. This outcome was not foreseen. In 1917 and for some time afterwards, the collapse of the Russian state could be regarded either as the opening phase of a socialist world revolution—it was so regarded by the Bolsheviks and by Communists in the West—or as a belated "bourgeois" revolution confined to Eastern Europe.

In hard fact, it turned out to be neither, but the starting point of an entirely novel chain of events leading to the establishment of a totalitarian empire. In the historical perspective, it was the Kerensky Revolution of 1917 that was the successor, and the East European counterpart, of the French Revolution of 1789; much as the American Revolution of 1776 was a belated consequence of the Puritan Commonwealth of 1648-60. The Stalinist regime, however, as it now exists, has no counterpart and no predecessor, though superficial analogies can be and have been drawn with the later imperialism to which the French Revolution ultimately gave birth. Combining Eastern and Western features in an unprecedented manner, it is an entirely new political and social formation, and it is capable of indefinite expansion into regions impervious to Western penetration. Not a European formation, as the St. Petersburg regime on the whole was, it deliberately attempts to build up a Eurasian synthesis, and it persecutes the adherents of Europeanism even within the privileged Communist party. It hopes to overawe and incorporate Europe, after having revolutionized—and to some extent Europeanized—its own Asian hinterland; but it does not intend to amalgamate with Europe. It regards Europe as a mere adjunct in the expected trial of strength with America.

The appearance of a Eurasian empire in the place of the Russian state—which was a member of the European family, though a late-comer and in some respects not a full member—has changed the world balance of forces in the West's disfavor, for this empire intervenes between the Western centers of industrial civilization and the world's agrarian hinterland—Asia. European predominance in the 19th century made possible a fleeting and precarious balance between advanced and backward countries. This balance was maintained by uncontrolled migration and capital investment, and guaranteed in the last resort by the Pax Britannica. The successive shocks sustained by this system in the 1914-18 war, in the world economic crisis of 1930-33, and in the war of 1939-45, when it finally collapsed, gave rise in each case to utopian expectations of imminent worldwide social and political breakdown. The Kremlin, for all that it consistently overrated the chances of revolution, and underestimated the West's capacity to reorganize itself under American leadership, did perceive more clearly than its opponents the opportunities offered to a consistently anti-Western policy in Asia. Lenin had told his followers to look to agrarian revolution in China and India as a stimulus to proletarian revolution in America and Europe, on the grounds that Western capitalism maintained itself (and the high living standard of the "aristocracy of labor") only at the expense of the primary producing countries. His economics were crude and oversimplified, but they fitted the political exigencies of Soviet foreign policy, as well as the anti-Western prejudices which the Bolsheviks had inherited from the Narodniks, and the latter from the Slavophiles. In consequence, the anti-Western policy he laid down was continued and accentuated by the Stalinist regime, long after most of the genuine innovations introduced by the revolution had been "liquidated."

It was at first not perceived in the West that this line of approach laid bare a basic weakness in the international system of economic and political relationships of which Russia had after 1917 ceased to be a member. The economic nexus depended upon the free flow of capital and technical skill from highly developed to relatively primitive areas, which in consequence tended to fall under the political control of the great industrial centers, i.e., the leading Western nations. The resulting inter-imperialist rivalries might be thought to have

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provoked the catastrophe of 1914, but in any case they could be used to mobilize working-class opposition in the West, as well as nationalist movements in the dependent territories. *Thus Comintern strategy took shape, under Soviet direction, in a way serviceable to Russian national interests as well as Bolshevik preconceptions.* When the Kremlin denounced Western imperialism, it justified its policy of repudiating Czarist debts and confiscating foreign holdings; when it identified colonialism with overseas penetration into Africa and Asia, it established an oblique defense of the Czarist achievement in colonizing Siberia and Central Asia: an accomplishment it had no intention of surrendering. That the landlocked Russian empire had been unable to practice overseas colonization, though it expanded overland until it reached the Pacific, was an excellent reason for condemning all Western expansion as criminal. These naive prejudices were rationalized by Lenin, who shared the Great Russian view of Western history, into a doctrinaire system which the Stalinists continue to employ, though they no longer feel bound by its logic.

What has rendered this self-serving Russian ideology intellectually respectable to Western socialists is its emphasis on a previously neglected side of the role played by European capital along with its great internal expansiveness, that of hindering the economic *and political* development of backward countries. Soviet theorists do not feel bound to state in public that *some* form of imperialism is the inevitable consequence of "uneven development," though the entire policy of their government is based on this realization. They are content to note that foreign capital stimulates economic development, but at the same time restricts the *modus operandi* of the local bourgeoisie. The latter, thus driven into opposition, become good material for a "united front" policy. That this policy is consciously directed towards the ultimate replacement of Western control, *not by local nationalist rule but by Soviet imperialism,* need not be proclaimed from the house tops.

THE Soviet Union and the West, accordingly, are competitors in a common revolutionary task; and since there now exist two rival centers of power, there is no inherent reason why some backward countries should not be drawn to the quasi-revolutionary imperialism of Moscow. The trouble, from the Soviet viewpoint, is that the political attractiveness of the Communist solution for the revolutionary peoples has diminished *pari passu* with the improvement of its material chances of realization.

Soviet prestige was high among anti-colonial rebels in the decade following the revolution, but at that time the program was flawed by Russia's military and economic weakness. Moscow might denounce imperialism as exploitation, but the primary producers needed machinery and manufactures, and were dependent upon markets in the industrialized countries. Dissatisfaction with the terms of trade, or with Western political control, might stimulate nationalism, but could hardly induce a suicidal impulse to break away from the world market. This conflict of motivations underlay the Chinese nationalist revolution of the mid-20's which ended with a sharp defeat for the Chinese Communist party and the Comintern. Only after the Soviet Union had emerged as a world power rivaling the United States was it possible for Communist parties to take over the direction of national-revolutionary movements.

By that time, however, the glory of the October rising had been tarnished by the Stalinist despotism. The pretense that the Soviet Union is not an imperialist power can hardly be maintained any longer, and Western spokesmen, having recovered some of their self-confidence, are now habituated to denouncing the enemy in the classic accents of democratic liberalism. To that extent the characteristic 19th-century relationship between the Russian empire and the liberal West has latterly been restored.

Yet on the whole the West remains on the defensive, and it is relevant to inquire into the reasons. Some of them are obvious: two world wars have discredited the notion that competing imperialisms can safely be entrusted with the task of "opening up" the world market and spreading the benefits of a Western civilization which has itself given rise to the monstrosities of European fascism. On the economic side, the primary producers were all but ruined by the world crisis of the early 1930's, which resulted from an industrial slump in the United States, and they

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have no guarantee that the disaster will not be repeated. There is also the memory of colonialism. These reminiscences, however, do not wholly account for the strength of anti-Western sentiment in regions freed from foreign control, such as India, or never subjected to it. The "anti-imperialist" campaign is running full blast in countries whose long-term interests clearly point towards closer association with the United States and Western Europe. This is puzzling and disappointing to American liberals and British socialists. "Imperialism" has been buried; why then should Soviet and Communist propaganda make so much headway?

The main reason is that the liquidation of imperial control by itself was no great economic benefit to the countries concerned, all suffering from the consequences of "uneven development" and crying out for massive capital investment, as well as for radical internal changes. Nationalism had won a great victory; it was now confronted with the fact that *backward areas can develop their wealth only if advanced countries are willing to export surplus capital.* But foreign investment on a large scale, whether public or private, *means some degree of foreign control,* however camouflaged.

Under the old liberal-imperialist scheme of things, the whole process went forward more or less spontaneously, capital following the lure of profits, markets, and raw material sources, and political control by the imperial metropolis establishing itself in its wake. The breakdown of this integration meant that a new mechanism had to be devised to enable capital to cross national frontiers. Bretton Woods, the Marshall Plan, Point Four were efforts in this direction. But partly because their scale was inadequate, partly because they were not backed by popular movements able to compete with the Stalinist integration of imperialism and revolution, *they never really touched the imagination of those key groups in the recipient countries whose cooperation was and remains essential.* What little is being done along these lines by the United States in Latin America and India, or by European countries in their remaining African and Asian dependencies, cannot stem the Communist drive, which has behind it not merely the resources of a great power, but a worldwide totalitarian movement.

II

THE cold war must be viewed against this background. In form a conflict between two groups of powers, it really concerns the political control of those regions which the "uneven development" of the world economy has placed in a position of inferiority towards the great metropolitan centers. *Success or failure for the West must in the long run depend on our ability to replace the old imperialism by a system broadly fulfilling the same economic functions, but better able to satisfy national and social aspirations.* The dilemma of the West is that the attempt to raise the backward countries economically either produces political opposition or is frustrated by political incompetence. If experience is any guide, semi-dependent countries will develop anti-foreign and nationalist movements *pari passu* with the influx of capital, while sovereign states will waste foreign assistance on arms and other unproductive purposes. In such circumstances it may not be possible to avoid the "fatal imperialist consequences" of imposing political control, visible or otherwise. We must face the plain fact that *imperialism,* in the broad sense of the term, that is, *the process and relations of empire in some form,* remains *a necessary concomitant of "uneven development."* And no one realizes this better than the "anti-imperialists" in the Kremlin.

Given even a reasonably progressive and efficient government in the recipient country, the influx of publicly owned capital must raise the further problem of turning the state into an organ of modernization and "revolution from above." It is not easy to see how this can be done unless centralized state control is adopted. Public funds, in the nature of the case, cannot simply be turned over to private investors, even if their existence could be taken for granted. In fact, of course, "private enterprise" is almost totally lacking in backward countries. What goes under this name is a caricature of the genuine article, from the encouragement of which only the Communists can profit. The main investment sectors will have to be under state control for a long time to come, if only because basic industries and services have to be created which cannot for many years be expected to show a profit. The flow of private capital from the United States and other Western countries is in any case

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unlikely to be substantial, for why should entrepreneurs risk almost certain loss and confiscation abroad when high and secure profits are possible at home? There is little danger of the old imperialism based on capital in search of foreign investment coming back. Today capital has to be lured from its hiding place, and this problem will hardly be solved except at the taxpayer's expense.

In the economic sphere there is then no choice: publicly controlled capital (if any can be found) will have to be directed to areas where the investment program is under the control of the public authorities. The difficulty begins when these comforting abstractions are translated into definite social and political terms. It then appears that public authorities of this kind are either colonial administrations, of the type established, e.g., by Britain in the Sudan—very efficient and relatively immune to local pressures, but remote from the inhabitants and subject to nationalist attack—or home-grown dictatorships. No third choice presently exists to hand: democracy as known to advanced Western countries is not possible, and the kind of parliamentary oligarchy which has established itself here and there, in the wake of Western influence, is useless for the purpose, whatever its other merits. It is usually corrupt, but even if it were not the task would be beyond it. Oligarchies are unable to control a social revolution, not because they are "selfish," but because they are not centralized, and consequently cannot master the state apparatus on whose effectiveness everything depends.

This problem has been obscured by the menace of totalitarianism: a particular form of dictatorship, but not the only form of centralized control possible. Essentially it is a question of centralizing the authority of the state by making the executive independent of sectional pressure groups, of which there are always a number. This process is inevitable in a period of rapid social change, if authority is not to disappear altogether. It is the stresses set up by the modernization of a hitherto backward country that reinforce the need for a strong central government, and this is particularly true if industrialization is accompanied by agrarian reform, as it must be if the whole process is to be genuine and not a sham. But in the last resort, the reinforcement of governmental authority is necessitated by the weakness of the middle class and the low level of private savings. What the local bourgeoisie cannot or will not do must be done, *tant bien que mal,* by the bureaucracy. Above all, the state must impose collective savings far beyond the limit of what individuals would be likely to save privately, if left to their own devices. Where average incomes are so low that voluntary savings are inadequate to finance the necessary investments, the saving has to be done by the government. Land reform and the progressive recasting of income tax—the favorite panaceas of modern liberalism—are irrelevant to this particular problem, for although in the long run they tend to improve living standards and consequently encourage saving, their immediate effect is to stimulate consumption, just when the need for the expansion of capital equipment calls for an increase in savings. Yet structural reform is necessarily part of the program. Backward countries are typically plagued by the overcrowding of badly farmed, sub-marginal land by an expanding number of impoverished peasant farmers, working with antiquated tools on fragmented holdings, in debt to moneylenders and other pests, and unable either to increase the yield of their land or to find employment in urban industry. Only by withdrawing surplus labor from submarginal land and employing it in industry can a net addition be effected to the community's total output, and such a policy calls for action of a kind which the entrepreneurial class is generally unable to take.

This assumption by the state of the entrepreneurial function, whether on totalitarian lines or not, is in fact common to all genuinely modern attempts to hasten the industrialization of backward areas. The revolutionary regime derives its justification from it, and at the same time owes to it whatever inspiration it brings to the people under its control. It is, indeed, the realization that *only state action can shake society out of its rut* which impels revolutionaries to seek power. It is consequently the weakness, and not, as Lenin has it, the predominance of the national bourgeoisie, which finds expression in the phenomenon of revolutionary nationalism. If the entrepreneurs were able

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to direct the process of modernization on "classical" lines there would clearly be no need for national dictatorships, national organizations of capital and labor, state parties, state-controlled youth movements, and the other paraphernalia of modern statist politics. Regimes of this kind need not be fully totalitarian, but they can hardly fail to be revolutionary and centralist. Whether they are Stalinist, Titoist, Socialist, Kemalist, Fascist, or Perónist depends on which faction of the revolutionary movement manages to seize power during the period which precedes the centralization of activity by, through, and under the state. But whatever the political regime, centralization is bound under these circumstances to become both the prime goal and the chief instrument of revolution.

The conviction that *centralization of economic activity under state direction* is "progressive," i.e., represents the *sine qua non* of rapid modernization, is the common bond linking all factions of the national revolutionary movement. But for this common conviction, there would be no common "anti-imperialist" platform, no united front, no Trojan horse, and no chance for the Communists to gain control of the process. All disputes within a revolutionary movement of this kind are at bottom differences about the degree and form of centralization requisite for the task of building a modern nation. All political conflicts among the various factions go back to disagreements over the kind of state best suited to this purpose. Discussion always centers upon such questions as the scope left to private enterprise, the use made of the traditional government classes (assuming they are not to be "liquidated"), the role of labor, etc. Generally speaking, the faction which can secure the adherence of organized labor and the largest possible number of people in the managerial stratum will tend to come out on top. If it can persuade itself and others that its activities *have something to do with "building socialism,"* so much the better for its morale. Thus modernization will favor the extension of state control, even under conditions where power still lies with the entrepreneurs and allied groups. All the more will this be the case where a genuine revolution has taken place and the former ruling classes have been displaced. The mechanics of this process apply impartially to Latin American dictatorships of the Perónist variety, Kemalism in the Middle East, and Titoism in Yugoslavia, and, in a sense, to the early stage of Mussolini's dictatorship in Italy.

THAT the Soviet Union should threaten to become the main beneficiary of what is really a worldwide phenomenon, quite unrelated to Communist aims, must be regarded as one of the by-products of the cold war. In the 1930's and early 1940's, fascism held greater attraction for these movements than Stalinism. Yet the prestige accruing to the Soviet Union from its military victory over Germany, and the progress of industrialization in Russia, do not wholly account for the change that has taken place. There is an element peculiar to Stalinism which favors a synthesis with national and colonial revolution. Unlike fascism, with which otherwise it has so much in common, the Stalinist regime *is able to exploit a revolutionary mystique*. Moreover, its techniques are consciously directed towards a thorough transformation of society by what is best called a *"revolution from above."* The point is that every Communist party now has before it the image of a successful revolution imposed by force upon "the masses" *after* the capture of power. It is not too much to say that this conception, and the technique for realizing it, represent the central arcanum of Stalinism.

The nature of this challenge is frequently masked by the very real threat represented by Soviet military expansion. Essentially the heart of the Soviet menace lies in the illusion of a revolutionary short-cut imposed from above by the state. From the Communist viewpoint, this terrifying vision has the character of an immense discovery: there is no need to accept things as they are! A means lies at hand to revolutionize society as thoroughly as it was to have been revolutionized, according to the original formula, by a victorious popular uprising. Total revolution is still possible, but it must be imposed *from above*. The managed revolution which does not have to await a victorious popular uprising, this is the great discovery of Stalinism, its shibboleth, the sign by which the initiated recognize one another. It justifies all the horrors of the interim period, for at its conclusion there lies the prom-

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ised land—or so the worshippers imagine.

THUS, in the last resort the cold war—like the series of wars and upheavals in Eastern Europe during the past generation—arises (to quote H. Seton-Watson's *The East European Revolution*)

> from the impact of the West on the East, the conflict between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries which exist side by side in Eastern Europe. This phenomenon is by no means confined to Eastern Europe. It is found in different forms in Asia, the Middle East and South America, and is beginning to appear in Africa.

Yet rural poverty, population pressure, the failure of the traditional governing class, and the presence of a nucleus of politically conscious workers in industry do not of themselves give rise to a revolutionary situation. The "subjective factor," whose absence in Western Europe after 1918 the Comintern theorists found so hard to explain, is represented by the intelligentsia; to be precise, by that part of it which refuses to accept things as they are, and turns—again I quote Seton-Watson—to political action:

> The Iron Guard in Rumania, the early Wafd in Egypt, the early Kuomintang in China, the first Communist movements in the Balkans, all have in common the frustration of the intellectual who has savored the delights of the twentieth century and knows that his people is living in the sixteenth. All were movements for both national and social revolution.
>
> In a sense, Russian Bolshevism is only a special case of this general phenomenon. . . . Lenin was the heir not only of Marx but of the Russian revolutionary intellectuals. He was fighting not only a class war against Russia's rulers, but a war for the national liberation and the modernization of Russia. The revolutionary leader of a country whose industrial wealth largely belonged to French, British, German and Belgian capitalists felt a special sympathy for the national revolutionary movements of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Under the rule of the Georgian Stalin this element in Soviet policy, and so in world Communist doctrine, became still more prominent.

## III

THE rise of Bolshevism is significant because it is the classic case of a revolutionary elite of "professionals" becoming the core of a political party which proved capable of overthrowing the Russian state. This could not have been done by a democratic mass movement, however broadly based. Any movement of that character, whether liberal, socialist, or agrarian, would have been amenable to class, i.e. sectional, interests and pressures which every revolutionary regime must for a time override and ignore. It could only be done by an organization which was already highly centralized and dictatorial. Because the hard core of the Bolshevik party was "classless" and composed of "professionals," it was able to lead the revolution, and for the same reason it was able subsequently to establish the first great totalitarian system in modern history. The latent totalitarianism of the intelligentsia, of which we hear so much today, must be related to this phenomenon of revolutionary professionalism. The "professional" need not be an intellectual in the usual meaning of the term; he can belong to any social stratum; he can be an army officer. Professional soldiers, too, are in a sense classless and consequently able to sponsor revolutionary measures which cut across established relationships. Such action will be motivated by concern not for "the revolution," but for the state or the public good. It is nonetheless an expression of a particular revolutionary current in society.

It is, however, the totalitarian political party which comes closest to being the ideal instrument of "the revolution," i.e., of the intelligentsia's break with the past and its attempt to found a modern state. A party of this kind embraces a much wider field than a mere officers' junta and can act over a larger and more complex area. An army is a specialist body; a political party is potentially all-embracing, that is, totalitarian—but only on condition that its origins are free from the taint of class interest. It is this fact which gives a key role to the intelligentsia, the only non-specialized, or rather omni-specialized, body in society. The organization of professional revolutionaries, which on the morrow of its victory transforms itself into the nucleus of a new ruling class, is potentially totalitarian because it is independent of the established class interests. It can organize the whole of society because it is not organically a part of any section of it. That is its professionalism, and the secret of its power and attraction. Were it organically part of any

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major class—as the Communist party claims to be the "vanguard" of the working class, and as the fascist party is mistakenly supposed to represent the bourgeoisie—it could never become genuinely totalitarian. It could not, that is to say, become a state party. For the state to become totalitarian, the party that captures it must have originated from a nucleus of revolutionaries with control over *all* organizations reflecting ordinary economic and social interests, from trade unions to chambers of commerce.

That the state party regime can, under favorable circumstances, count on the support of the bureaucracy, or at least a large fraction of it, has been repeatedly shown in recent decades. The main reason, usually overlooked by historians of revolution, is that the state apparatus consists of functionaries whose activities to some extent transcend sectional class and group interests—otherwise the state would not be able to function at all. Their consciousness, that is to say, takes shape at the point of intersection of group conflicts. The same is true of the intelligentsia, in particular that part of it which eventually joins the revolutionary movement, and *a fortiori* of the "professionals." Thus the social function of the state bureaucracy corresponds to that of the revolutionary elite: both specialize, as it were, in general activities, and their peculiar *Weltanschauung* rests on the interrelation of sectional needs and viewpoints, and on the need to synthesize and manage them. Both groups are in consequence able to merge, after the revolution has taken place, in the totalitarian state party which continues the stabilizing activity of the one, and the revolutionary aims of the other.

As the nature of this challenge is gradually coming to be better understood, a tendency arises to seek a counter-irritant in the form of non-Communist dictatorships with progressive social aims. The trouble with this solution is that in nine cases out of ten it becomes an excuse for shirking the real issue.

Dictatorship can be a necessary short-cut to the "revolution from above"; it can also be a façade imposed on a rotting framework. The difference depends on the personnel of the regime, which in turn depends on the aims it is supposed to serve. Ever since Cromwell, and in particular since the French Revolution, a temporary dictatorship of the "left" has had its defenders even among democrats. It is, however, dangerous to ignore the ambiguous use to which this solution can be put. Most dictatorships, being neither based in the people nor interested in popular aims, are ineffective. The Kemalist regime in pre-war Turkey, and the Titoist one in present-day Yugoslavia, are exceptions to the general rule, and their effectiveness was and is largely bound up with their quasi-totalitarian character. The Kemalist revolution owed its impetus to the break with Islam—hitherto a unique phenomenon—and it was carried through by a revolutionary junta which for many years tolerated no rival. Marshal Tito's dictatorship would collapse if it were not propped up by the Yugoslav Communist party; and heretical Communist movements do not grow on trees. The Yugoslav miracle was an uncovenanted piece of luck for which Western policy-makers have not ceased to apologize, since 1948, as though it were something to be ashamed of. They are unfortunately not likely to suffer a succession of such embarrassments. With a Republican administration ensconced in Washington, it is far more probable that the West will continue to be deluged with offers of support from conservative generals, Perónist demagogues, and elderly bed-ridden intriguers in the distinguished succession of Doctors Mossadegh and Syngman Rhee. This is a misfortune, for there is reason to doubt whether a dictatorship not backed by a quasi-revolutionary mass movement can nowadays function effectively at all.

The cause must probably be sought in the growing complexity of modern society which makes the task of coordination and management impossibly difficult for an old-fashioned regime of the military or bureaucratic kind. This problem is accentuated if the regime tries to bring about genuine changes—and if it does not, it is doomed anyway. Revolutionary mass movements with their organized youth sections, women's sections, and so forth, are indispensable to a central government which is trying to reach down into deeper strata of the population in order to mobilize popular support for a policy of modernization and reform. It follows that non-totalitarian dictatorships will tend to be socially conservative, while revolutionary regimes will develop totalitarian tendencies.

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Since social revolution and totalitarianism are alike distasteful to Western opinion, preference is likely to be given to "respectable" dictators who refrain from tampering with established property rights, and who do not indulge in the modern practice of setting up as charismatic popular leaders. There is no doubt that regimes of this kind are easier to get on with; unfortunately they are also more likely to be swept away by the next wave of unrest.

Benevolent dictatorship continues nonetheless to have its supporters among advanced liberals and socialists anxious for a short-cut to reform. Both among New Dealers, now temporarily out of office, and in quarters closer to the "extreme center" of modern liberalism, there is a tendency to seek a panacea in land reform decreed by military dictators. This ignores the lesson of the interwar years, when fairly radical measures of agrarian redistribution in Eastern Europe failed for lack of social policies discriminating in favor of the poorer peasants, as well as from shortage of capital and technical skill. (Compare H. Seton-Watson's *Eastern Europe Between the Wars*.) Further left, emphasis is placed on welfare economics, and particularly on the need to stimulate food production in backward areas by means of gigantic transfers of capital under Point Four, in order to break the vicious circle of poverty, malnutrition, technical backwardness, and low productivity. These suggestions are sound so far as they go, but they seem to underrate the time factor and the difficulty of revolutionizing archaic peasant economies by the application of outside technical aid and advice. It may well be that a comparatively small investment of capital and skill could yield disproportionate results, provided the peasants were willing to cooperate, and the local administration was capable of giving the necessary stimulus. But this is to beg the question. Capable administrations simply do not exist under such circumstances unless they are provided by foreigners, in which case they become the target for nationalist attacks. There is also the likelihood that any increase in output will be swallowed up by an even more rapid growth of population unless economic change is accompanied by cultural revolution. This particular problem usually settles itself in the long run, but runs of that length concern the historian of cultural epochs rather than the political scientist, much less the practicing politician. Welfare economics (which result in falling death rates and rapid population growth, in advance of any significant rise in output) are no answer to the problems of these regions, or of the yet more backward colonial areas which are only now beginning to experience these peculiarly modern stresses.

## IV

THE challenge of Soviet imperialism has in recent years called forth a variety of reactions ranging from short-lived reliance on the military factor to plain defeatism. Among the defeatists one must include those historians of culture who are obsessed with the Decline of the West, and in search of solutions transcending the political sphere. It is in these quarters that Communism is taken seriously as a quasi-religion, and much anxious thought is given to the possibility that Asia and Africa may yet escape the contamination by clinging to their old religions or adopting Roman Catholicism (and Rome's doctrines on birth control?). The fact that Communism is spreading much faster in Roman Catholic areas than Catholicism is in Asia, appears to have escaped notice. On present evidence there seems no reason to believe that the international situation would be more manageable if China and Japan had been converted by Jesuit missionaries in the 16th and 17th centuries—a suggestion which startled some hearers of Dr. Toynbee's recent series of Reith Lectures.

As he looks beyond the Mediterranean, towards the border regions between the Soviet empire and the West, the historian of this strip is inevitably attracted by the ancient and petrified totalitarianism of Islam. Inevitably, too, the dignified stagnation of Islamic society appeals to conservative instincts in the beholder. Cannot this archaic structure be reinforced with bits of concrete—treaties, air bases, arms, etc.—so as to become another defensive "bulwark"? This policy is now over a generation old. Its net achievement is a situation in which quite small "cadres" of Communists are potentially strong enough to upset all the established governments of the region—not, of course, under their own flag but by spearheading national-revolutionary movements. The exception is Turkey, where Islam was dis-

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established in the 1920's, with the result that the Republic is today the only genuinely Westernized portion of the former Ottoman Empire (leaving Israel aside as not belonging to the Middle East proper). In the remainder of the area, pan-Islamism is crumbling, while pan-Arabism provides an excellent cover for rival fascist and Stalinist cliques, and an instrument for blackmailing the Western powers.

The region has for long been the favorite playground of politically minded Orientalists, historians anxious for a role in the cold war, and people who prefer horse-drawn vehicles to motor traffic. Various eminent members of this school were at one time or another associated with the abortive inter-war project of constructing a kind of Anglo-Arab Caliphate from the debris of the Ottoman Empire, while others, slightly more up-to-date, busied themselves with schemes for fashioning a lasting alliance between British foreign policy and pan-Arabism. The miscarriage of these curious experiments, and the postwar decline of British influence in the Middle East, have brought about a *malaise* which finds expression in gloomy Spenglerian prognostications and in persistent nagging at the Americans, the French, the Turks, and the Israelis: all of them unhampered by memories of personal and collective failure in building dream castles in the Arabian desert, and consequently apt to take a somewhat more robust view of Western prospects. It is in these circles that discreet support is given to every utopian or reactionary scheme for driving the French from North Africa, pushing Turkey into a confederation with the creaking Islamic states of the Middle East, or removing that persistent thorn in the flesh, Israel. For why should these relative newcomers presume to interfere with the Decline of the West?

IT IS indeed undeniable that the impact of the West upon Islamic society creates a special problem. Islam is a totalitarianism which safeguards the culture of a society economically stagnant for so long that it cannot adapt peacefully or gradually to modern conditions. At the ideological level, where this failure to adapt enters the consciousness of the participants, it translates itself into a conflict between two sets of motives: an inflexible resolve to keep things as they are, and a furious determination to break with the past at all cost. Both attitudes are clearly pathological; at least they would be so described in relation to an individual. In social terms they portend the kind of cycle of rebellion and stagnation which Spain has undergone since the early 19th century.

Unlike Spain, though, the Middle East, apart from its Mediterranean fringe, could be incorporated in the Soviet orbit at small cost to its inhabitants. The peasants obviously could not be worse off than they are, and the professional class might find satisfaction in running the revolution. There clearly is no necessary link between nationalism and social conservatism, let alone between nationalism and affection for the "free world." Nationalism can be conservative, liberal, democratic, or totalitarian, depending on the circumstances. It can be Communist or fascist. Tito is a nationalist and so is Franco. The question whether Mao Tse-tung is primarily a nationalist "or" a Communist belongs to the realm of scholasticism: he is both one and the other, and the Chinese Communist party is more nationalist in some respects than the Kuomintang, with its roots in the Westernizing business class, ever was. There is no inherent reason why nationalism and Stalinism should not form a stable amalgam in the Islamic Middle East, as they have done in China and may yet do in India. The reason they have not done so in Turkey is that Turkish nationalism has shaped itself upon a different model, owing to the success of the Kemalist revolution in modernizing the country, i.e., promoting its rupture with the decaying medieval tradition: the very process which Islamic conservation seeks to impede elsewhere. Turkey is today a nation because the people have learned to identify themselves with the state, and they have been able to do so because the state has reorganized their lives. What is by courtesy described as "the state" in other countries formerly belonging to the Ottoman Empire has no real existence, and in consequence there is nothing for the national consciousness to lay hold of.

## V

IT IS one of the many oddities of the contemporary situation that this topic is still for the most part discussed in terms of Lenin's doctrine of nationalism, which the Stal-

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inists no longer take seriously. In its pure form, Leninism involves a distinction between the "natural" emotion of patriotism and the allegedly "bourgeois" concept of sovereign nationality, which is supposed to reflect the impact of capitalism and the creation of an internal market. This doctrine attributes to the bourgeoisie emotions which are in fact held by the peasants, and fails to explain why the submerged rural populations of Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America have made their political debut in national dress. Following Lenin, Western writers and policy-makers—influenced perhaps by scraps of Communist theory acquired during their student days—have persistently misinterpreted national movements as expressions of bourgeois class interest, with results which now and then have been serious. We thus get to the notion that indigenous "bourgeois nationalism" can be played off against "international Communism," and the resultant confusion in understanding such movements as Vietminh and the Chinese revolution.

What really happens is that, as the self-contained village community breaks down under the impact of modern technology, communications, taxation, conscription, and radio, the peasant forms a mental image of a countrywide peasant community which for him is the nation. If this process is speeded by agrarian upheaval, and the mental contours rendered sharper and clearer by foreign control—a more palpable object of dislike than the traditional rulers within one's own community—a revolutionary situation may arise which an active minority can exploit to impose its own leadership. If this minority consists of Communists, the Communist party will dominate the nationalist movement, and Western observers will wonder how such a thing could happen, and how it squares with either "true" Communism or "true" nationalism (which by definition is "bourgeois"). This shows the inconvenience of being guided by Leninist textbooks, particularly when the enemy has abandoned them.

In backward, i.e., agrarian—the terms are interchangeable—countries, national movements are an aspect of the countryside's, not the bourgeoisie's, political awakening. The recognition of this fact is Soviet Communism's pecular contribution to modern sociology. Like most discoveries, it was made by accident: as Soviet and Comintern policy after 1917 collided with the West, it gradually became clear that its best chance lay with the exploitation of "anti-imperialist" movements in Asia and elsewhere, and that these movements were linked with peasant unrest. Doctrinal evolution proceeded slowly and haltingly, but has now reached the point where the "October Revolution" is made to symbolize the racial awakening of Asia and much else besides. Underlying all, there is the dim recognition that the peasant masses can be roused by national slogans because nationalism is one of their ways of asserting their class interest. This fact is obvious enough where the towns are the seat of an alien government or an alien ruling nationality, as was the case, for example, in 19th-century Ireland and in most East European countries before 1919, or even later. In these circumstances the traditional conflict between town and country becomes the vehicle of national animosities which can lead to the collapse of multi-national empires such as Austria-Hungary. The peculiar achievement of Communism consists in extrapolating this historic conflict on a world scale, *in the revolt of the vast peasant hinterland against the industrial West.* Hence the appeal of "anti-imperialism," which is a social as well as a national slogan.

And yet Lenin, who armed his followers for this struggle, now raging all over the globe, unwittingly bared the Achilles heel of Communism when he pointed out that the peasantry is vitally interested in the growth of democracy. For only majority rule and political freedom can safeguard its long-term economic and political interests. With that blunt realism which is the distinguishing mark of his thought, the Bolshevik leader in 1905 told his followers—then still Social Democrats and not yet Communists—that after the revolution against the Czar (the "democratic revolution") they would find themselves confronted with the problem of the peasant majority and its vested interest in democracy:

> . . . the peasantry will inevitably become a bulwark of the revolution and the republic, for only a completely victorious revolution can give the peasantry everything in the sphere of agrarian reforms—everything that the peasants desire, of which they dream and of which they

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truly stand in need . . . in order to emerge from the mire of semi-serfdom, from the gloom of oppression and servitude, in order to improve their living conditions as much as it is possible to improve them under the system of commodity production.

Moreover, the peasantry is drawn to the revolution not only by the prospect of radical agrarian reform but by its general and permanent interests. *Even in the struggle with the proletariat the peasantry stands in need of democracy, for only a democratic system is capable of giving exact expression to its interests and of insuring its predominance as the mass, the majority.* The more enlightened the peasantry becomes . . . the more consistently and determinedly will it favor a thoroughgoing democratic revolution, for . . . it has nothing to fear from the supremacy of the people, but, on the contrary, can only gain by it. (Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*. Italics mine.)

"Only a democratic system" is capable of safeguarding the peasantry's interests: one may easily guess what would happen to a Soviet writer who made inopportune use of this devastating remark. But Westerners need not suffer similar inhibitions. Even if Lenin had not spelled it out for them, they should by now be aware of the conflict between Communist policies and peasant aims. In 1905 it was still possible for the future leader of the revolution to remark in all candor that the peasants needed to defend themselves not only against the Czar but also against "the proletariat," i.e., the revolutionary movement he himself represented. After 1917 such candor became inexpedient; today it has disappeared altogether, at least in public. This need not disturb democratic socialists, since they have no wish to impose a totalitarian dictatorship upon the peasant majority in agrarian countries. Their problem is to win the latter's consent to changes that are in its interest: something the Communists have never even tried. In supporting their efforts to erect a genuine "bulwark against Communism," the West can take heart from the fact that in working for democracy they are also serving the interests of the peasants, i.e., doing in fact what the Stalinists merely pretend to be doing. Political freedom is no luxury, to be reserved for a few favored Western countries; it is just as essential to the submerged peoples of the East, for it is only through the democratic process that they can safeguard their material aims. From which it follows that revolutionary dictatorships should never be regarded as anything but *brief interregnums making possible a radical break with the past.* As such they may be necessary evils; if they pretend to be more they become totalitarian.

ARMED with such criteria for distinguishing true revolutions from false ones, the West may yet hope to win over a majority of Eastern revolutionaries to its cause. It must, however, be acknowledged that there is no easy remedy for a situation due in large part to the decentralized character of our world. If Western society were as streamlined, efficient, and self-conscious as the Stalinists imagine it to be, the problem would never have arisen. Unfortunately it is not, and there is no immediate prospect of its becoming so. It may be years before the United States can be brought to underwrite the necessary combination of economic planning and social revolution, and it is plainly impossible for the other Western countries to proceed very far without American backing. Meanwhile, Moscow runs away with the national-revolutionary movement and advertises its brand of despotic planning to power-hungry intellectuals who care little for democracy and much for some means to drag society out of its stagnation. The Communist claim to represent the vanguard of the "proletarian revolution," like every myth, has real power to move human beings to act, and deserves to be taken seriously. But it ought not to be believed.

The greatest mistake the West can make is to think of the Communist issue in terms of class, and to pit against a wholly mythical "proletarian" movement the resources of the traditional state and its governing groups. The real issue lies between genuine libertarian revolutionaries and those who envisage the transformation of society only in terms of the Soviet experience since 1917. Revolution there must be—failing direct and effective Western control—for no movement, however libertarian its ultimate aims, will renounce the hope of using the concentrated power of the state to end the dreadful poverty and squalor in which the bulk of mankind still lives at the present day. In the struggle to prevent the enemy from gaining control of the entire process, the West cannot succeed if it does not match his resolution.

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# BIG-TOWN POLITICS: GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL

## *The Precinct Captain Gets Out the Vote*

**DAVID GUTMANN**

I FIRST met Mr. Dolin when we were both placed in the same car of a gigantic "Welcome Stevenson" motorcade which crawled through the streets of Chicago for five hours, on a day just before the close of the 1952 Presidential campaign. Mr. Dolin had been a precinct captain for twenty-five years; he also held a regular job as a liquor salesman. I was with my wife, and Mr. Dolin was not wrong in taking us for University of Chicago, I.V.I. (Independent Voters of Illinois) types. For the first hour or so he said nothing to indicate he had been "in the game" for a long time; we were liberals, and he was another liberal. But as the procession laid up in Washington Park, waiting for the motorcades from the other South Side wards to link up with ours, we talked more freely, and Mr. Dolin began to share with us the fruits of his political experience.

"Well, I couldn't tell you how it's going to go. Sure, the Republicans are doing a masterful public relations job, keeping Eisenhower on the front page every day, in spite of the fact that the man never says anything, never discusses the issues. Whether or not the people are going to be taken in by that this time, I just don't know. Of course, that's the difference between the Republican and Democratic parties. Now you take me, when people get in a jam, you know, like there's trouble here or there, they come to me, Republican and Democratic alike. They don't go to the Republican precinct captain. Half the time there isn't even one to go to, and if they do go to him they know he can't do anything for them anyway, and probably he won't even try. Lots of precincts don't even have Republican captains until election time, so with them it's more of a one-night-stand kind of thing whereas with me, it's year round, and people know where to find me. I'm always available. They can always get hold of me somewhere.

"The reason that it works out that way is that the Democratic party controls this town and has most of the patronage, so we're able to do things for people where the Republicans can't. Sure the Republicans can get some jobs for people, like in the West Side wards, but it's mostly laborers, low-class-type jobs. You don't figure patronage by the number of jobs that a man controls, but by 'tonnage.' What I mean by that, is that if a committeeman, say, controls one

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POLITICAL science deals in abstractions most of the time, so that the hard particulars of American politics tend to be overlooked, or to be referred to ironically in passing. In this article, which was written as part of a sociological study in connection with his work at the University of Chicago, DAVID GUTMANN gives us a portrait of a Chicago Democratic precinct captain, affording a vivid insight into the political practices of American democracy at the precinct level. Those who look objectively at the mechanism of metropolitan politics have recognized that the essential art that the ward-heelers, be they Dolins, Patrinos, O'Learys, or Joneses, practice, while it does not follow the pattern laid down in the copybooks, represents a means for registering and meeting the needs of lower-income groups, especially those of the underprivileged "minorities," paralleling other mechanisms that achieve similar goods for higher-level groups. In any case, we know that a number of respected thinkers about American politics consider that the grass-roots pattern described here (combining realistic electoral trading with practical "favors" and welfare benefits) constituted the big-city base for the social and economic reforms of the New Deal. Mr. Gutmann is a native New Yorker who served in the Israeli-Arab war; he is now working toward his master's degree at the University of Chicago.



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doctor's job at $9,000 a year, that job has the same tonnage as three laborers' jobs at $3,000 a year each. It's the party with the most tonnage that wins, not just the most jobs."

THIS started us off on the subject of getting out the vote, or translating this "tonnage" potential into votes on election day.

"Well, it's strictly routine, like anything else. Around this time of year you go around your precinct tallying your votes and getting an idea of where your strength is. Like you knock on peoples' doors and you ask them, 'How do you like Stevenson for President?'

"'Nope, I can't see him, too tied up with these Communists.' O.K., don't argue with him, never give him an argument and antagonize him, go on to the next guy, say Dixon.

"'How about Dixon? Now there's a fine man.'

"'I don't know. I think I like Stratton better.' O.K., go on to Gutknecht.

"'Gutknecht? I haven't thought anything about him, I haven't done any thinking about that race.'

"Well, there you got an opening, he hasn't made up his mind, you aren't going to antagonize him by trying to impress your opinion on him, maybe you can get a vote there. Of course, if you come up to somebody's door and they tell you that they're Republicans and going to vote the straight ticket, then get out, get the hell out, and don't waste your time there. Or if you ask them who they're voting for and they ask you what business is it of yours, don't get into a fight with them, just say, 'Of course you're not obligated to answer any of this. This is just a regular, disagreeable, routine job that we've got to do around this time of year.' Then maybe he'll simmer down and answer a few questions.

"Of course, some candidates are harder to get votes for than others. But when you're in politics at my level, you've got to get the vote out for the ticket, regardless of your feelings about any particular candidate. There's some candidates, like Tom Burton, the one they called 'the world's richest cop,' and it was like going around with two five-hundred-pound sacks in your hands trying to get votes for him. I knew when they put him on the ticket that it was the worst thing that they could've done, but I still had to go get votes for the man. Which, of course, it's only right that I do. If I just can't see a man, and I can't see getting votes for him, and I leave the organization, why that's all right, that's my privilege. But if I stay in the party and take their money, why they've got the right to expect that I do my best for them, just like any other kind of job."

AT ABOUT this time my wife left the car for a few minutes, and Mr. Dolin spoke of his relations with other politicians.

"In politics you've got to be aggressive. You don't want to be put in the position of being on the defensive. Never be the one that's got to be answering the questions, *you* always be the one that's doing the asking. Never be put on the spot, always be the guy to put the others on the spot. Like take me for instance, I'm Jewish, my first name is Isidore, and I've never changed it. While ago, down on the South Side, a guy came up to me and said, 'Hey, Dolin, I hear you're a Jew!' And quick as a bat I says to him, 'You're goddam right I'm a Jew and a goddam tough Jew at that!' So you see, right away I was turning the tables on him, not letting him think he had anything on me. Another time, I was talking to this Republican lady judge, and she said to me, 'Dolin, weren't you mixed up in a vote fraud at one time?'

"'Why, where'd you hear that?'

"'I just heard it.'

"'Well, what's this I heard (now that the ladies are gone) about you playing around with your chauffeur, only he threw you over because he was doing better somewhere else?'

"'Why, where did you hear that?'

"'I just heard it!'

"After that we could talk sense. She saw that she couldn't put anything over on an

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old hand in the game like me. Some people are just naturally mean-minded and small, and you've just got to deal with them that way. You've got to be just as mean-minded and as small as they are. Once you get put on the defensive, you're through."

MR. DOLIN had begun with the rule: be polite to the voters, tough to the politicians. But sometimes one doesn't have to treat the voter with kid gloves.

"There's this fella and his wife run a rooming house in the neighborhood, and I did him a favor a while back, got him out of a jam he was in. Well, the other day, I heard from a pretty reliable source that he was going to vote Republican this year. So I visited him and I says,

"'You know, I heard something about you the other day that worried me.'

"'What's that, Mr. Dolin?'

"'I heard that you were going to vote Republican this year.'

"'Aw, you know that ain't true, Dolin.'

"'Well, I heard it, and it *disturbs* me.'

"'Well, how can I show you that it ain't so?'

"'Look, do me a favor, that's how you can show me. When it comes Election Day, just don't vote, that's all I ask, just don't vote.'

"And he won't either. He knows that if he does, I'll get wind of it. That's him and his wife, two votes the Republicans won't get.

"Of course, this year a lot of people that I normally consider straight Democratic votes, people that are obligated to me, or you know, people that are just Democrats like their fathers were before them, are telling me that this year they just can't see voting Democratic. Well, I can't go against that. Where it's a matter of a man's principles and he's got the courage of his convictions, I can't argue with that. All I can do is to ask them as a personal favor to me, to give me the places on the ticket where they don't care one way or another which way it goes. If they don't want to give me the President and the Governor and the State's Attorney, well they can still give me a judge. That's what I tell them, 'Vote according to the courage of your convictions, but wherever you don't care one way or another, as a favor to me, give me those votes.' That's the way it is in this racket; where you can't get the whole sandwich, get half the sandwich, where you can't get half the sandwich, get the meat, where you can't get the meat, get the bread, where you can't get the bread, get the crust. *Get something!* That's the way it is in politics. You gotta fight for every little bit, and every little bit counts.

"Like you take some guys that are obligated to me. I've done them some kind of favor or something and come Election Day, around three-four o'clock and they still haven't voted, I'll send somebody around to them. That's right, I'll send somebody around to their place of residence, to tell them Mr. Dolin is wondering why they haven't voted yet. And the old man'll say to his wife, 'Dolin just sent word around that he's expecting us to come down and vote, so what the hell, I guess we better go. After all, I'm bound to meet him sometime in the cigar store or somewhere around.'"

MR. DOLIN was sure of his ground with a good number of voters, but he was inclined both to respect and propitiate the independent voters. He welcomed such a group as the I.V.I., which could approach these voters for him, and speak to them in their own language—for a majority of the I.V.I. choices were from the Democratic ranks, anyway.

"I figure, at a conservative estimate," said Mr. Dolin, "that the I.V.I. endorsement of a candidate is worth 2,000 to 3,000 votes in each ward, without the I.V.I even doing any precinct work, just their O.K. on him is enough."

There is another group of voters, besides the independents, who present a problem for Mr. Dolin. These are the transients, whose political sympathies aren't known, and who are difficult to keep accurate track of. Because of this, Mr. Dolin was indignant about the number of housing conversions in the

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neighborhood; this brought in the transients. The only ones in this group who are amenable are the Skid Row drifters. As we sped along West Madison Street honking and blowing, I asked if there was much sense in making a demonstration in this area since most of these men probably weren't registered voters. Mr. Dolin was shocked and a little indignant at my ignorance.

"Whaddaya mean? We got a lot of votes right along this street. These men know what the Democrats done for them, what with the relief and welfare agencies they got along here now."

"How do they keep them from shipping out to the labor camps before Election Day?"

"Oh, they kind of hang on to them. Get them a job or something like that to hold them in town for thirty days."

MR. DOLIN was proud of his political techniques and skills even though some of them were no longer much in demand. He asked me if I planned to be a poll-watcher, and if I did, whether I would be able to spot a vote fraud being perpetrated. His smile indicated that he didn't think I would, though, of course, "there won't be any of that sort of thing."

He complained about the deteriorating quality of the present-day political worker, those just coming into the profession, who were not of very high caliber, since politics as a profession was déclassé, and superior men sought advancement elsewhere.

"These young fellows nowadays, you give one of them a precinct, and he won't know the first thing about organizing it. Of course, you can't really expect it of him. It's like the Fuller Brush Company doesn't expect a new salesman to break any selling records on his first day. They send him out with an old-timer who knows the ropes, to break him in. It's the same thing with us. They'll assign me to go over the precinct with him, and we'll sit down together with a map.

"'How much strength you got here?'

"'Well, I'm pretty strong in that block, except for that one building on the corner. I haven't got a vote in it.'

"'And howrya around the schoolhouse here?'

"'Pretty solid through there.'

"'O. K., that's where we put the polling place.'

"That's the idea, understand, always try to put the polling place as close to your strength, and as far away from their strength, as you can. The further they've got to walk, the less of them'll vote. In politics, every little bit helps."

THE next time I saw Mr. Dolin was a few weeks after the election. I had called him up to say that I had been given an assignment to write a paper for a political science class on the causes behind the Eisenhower victory, and that I felt that a man with his grass-roots experience would have the most authoritative answers. I met him at a drug-store counter, and his first words were:

"Pretty bad, pretty bad, but at least we got Gutknecht and O'Hara!" (If you can't get the bread, get the crust.)

"Did you know it was going to be like this, when I saw you last?"

"I knew it was going to be bad, but not this bad, but by eleven o'clock in the morning I could see what it was going to be. It was strictly a protest vote. There's figures on these things. We know what the voting turnout has been in the past elections in these precincts, and we know how much of that is what we call a controlled vote, that is, a vote gotten out by political workers, people who got obligations to some party workers, or are just regular party voters. Then there's another percentage who vote because it's a Presidential year. Now, any percentage of voters over these figures, especially when one party's been in power as long as this one has, you can figure for a protest vote. Well, this time the percentages were something like 50 per cent over normal. Those people weren't coming to the polls to vote for something, they were coming to vote *against*. You didn't even have to look at any figures to know. When you see some old coot who's walked all the way from 61st to 55th Street to vote, and comes in leaning

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on his cane, puffing and quivering, you know how it's going to go. A lot of people obligated to me voted against me. I know, because some of them asked for instructions how to vote Republican, and some of them told me straight out that they would.

"Another big thing was this Korea business, what with its going on for so long, and all those casualties, and what are we doing there in the first place, though of course we got to be there, which nobody realizes.

"Another big thing was this masterful job of publicity the Republicans did for Eisenhower, keeping him on the front page every day, even though Stevenson was talking sense, and all Ike was saying was, 'Elect me, and I'll fix everything up.'

"And another thing was organized labor. The men voted Democratic, the way the unions told them to, but their wives voted for Eisenhower. They were voting against strikes. They'd rather see their men working all year round for, say, $1.90 an hour, than to have them strike for ten weeks to make $2.10.

"Of course, the weather makes a big difference. The controlled vote will get out, no matter what the weather is, but if it's bad, the independents stay home. Like just last week, some bookies that I know around City Hall were asking me to pick them some winners, that isn't to say that they pay me off or anything like that, but now and then, I get a new suit. They know I can call them better than almost anybody, which isn't to say that they go entirely by what I tell them, but they count what I say against what five other guys might tell them. I told them this time I couldn't call any of the local elections, and that a lot would depend on the weather.

"And then, it's my firm belief that most elections are won by money, and the Republicans had more of it. There's all those Texas and California oil millionaires, and Stevenson was finished for them when he came out for the federal ownership of the tidelands. Of course, there's plenty of these rich men will support one party financially, and then turn around and give the other party something, just to show there's no hard feelings."

At this point I asked Mr. Dolin if he would sum up his feelings for the benefit of my paper. And he replied,

"Sure, sure, glad to. Just say that: Now that it's all over, we've got the spectacle of cooperation between the two parties, and we see one of the defeated opponents helping the victor to take over smoothly, and the professionals on both sides are glad as long as the country's in good shape."

MY CONCLUSION is not quite the same as Mr. Dolin's. Actually the paper I was writing was on Mr. Dolin and I was interested in getting a view of Mr. Dolin's relation to the party which he represents, and to the public to whom he represents it. That relation, I would suggest, is quite simply that of a salesman, on a barter basis. Mr. Dolin is a go-between between his party, which has services and favors to sell the public in exchange for the public's votes, and the public, or at least the segments of it which are willing to exchange their votes for services—often enough to swing a close election. In this relationship the vote stands for currency, the party is the manufacturer or the supplier, the public is the consumer, and Mr. Dolin the door-to-door salesman. (Mr. Dolin expressed this relationship unconsciously when he compared a rookie precinct captain to a fledgling Fuller Brush salesman.) To the party the vote has "commodity" or exchange value, in that it represents a fraction of the total sum of votes needed by the party to gain exclusive control over the "tons" of patronage whereby it holds power, and to gain access to the financial resources of the community.

To the strategic segments of the public with whom the Dolins deal, the vote has commodity value in that it can be exchanged for city jobs, medical care in the county hospital, freedom from interference in extra-legal activities, etc. Mr. Dolin's mission as the party's face-to-face representative is to seek out "customers," see that contracts are

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honored on both sides, and make things as tough as possible for the competition. Mr. Dolin is hampered by the fact that at the same time he must shield the customer from a too vivid realization of the type of relation he has entered into. The only time Mr. Dolin makes the nature of the relation manifest is when the customer defaults on payment.

However, viewed in the "economic" perspective, the vote is not a single indivisible unit, but represents as many units of exchange, for any given year, as there are candidates on the party ticket for that year. This allows the voter to vote for some candidates on the basis of conviction, and to vote for others as payment to Mr. Dolin. Out of deference to the "Democratic Creed," and because he makes a certain identification with those who vote from the courage of their convictions, Mr. Dolin will accept such partial payment, a crust, as settlement for the total debt. Thus, the vote can be split, somewhat on the principle of "Don't spend all your money in one place," and one can use one's vote to do some shopping from both salesmen.

But with each succeeeding year, that section of the population so well-to-do as to have no need of Mr. Dolin's merchandise increases, and that was one of Mr. Dolin's problems in the last election. In the twenty years of its power the Democratic party created a new middle class out of the city masses upon which it depended for its power, and with whom it bartered social gains for votes. This new middle class no longer has any need of the particular commodities which its vote can buy, and is able to exercise a new prerogative, vote by conviction, or shop around for other channels for achieving the new goods that it now desires for itself and the general American society. To reach these independents Mr. Dolin must now rely on such organizations as the I.V.I., and he must more and more adapt both his candidates and his vocabulary to their liking.

I HOPE I have not been unfair to Mr. Dolin. After all, since he did me a favor and granted me an interview, I too am obligated. I have perhaps treated Mr. Dolin harshly because society as a whole renders a harsh judgment on him. This is a result of our looking at Mr. Dolin only as a citizen, and not as a professional politician. We don't ask of the salesman that in the line of duty his first loyalty be to his customer and not to the company which supplies him with its product and pays his salary. We take it to be perfectly natural that he might have to misrepresent his company's product a little to make a sale. "If his conscience is so tender, then he shouldn't be in selling," is the popular dictum.

Can we do without the selling? Theoretically, it's always possible for the citizen to "go into business for himself," so to speak—join political clubs, take a hand in selecting candidates, running primaries, doing his own canvassing, and so on—and now and then, we know, the regular "company" does such a bad job that the citizens do go into business for themselves. But that doesn't happen very often. If it should become the norm, why then Mr. Dolin will have to make a living selling liquor and he won't have any hard feelings. But until then, Mr. Dolin is available.

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# LABOR ZIONISM COMES TO POWER

## *The Making of the Ideals That Rule Israel: II*

JUDD L. TELLER

IT FELL to Berl Katznelson, still a very young man when Gordon died, to codify the diverse doctrines of Syrkin, Borochov, and Gordon. There was nothing formal about his performance. In fact, he himself may never have been aware of what it was that he was doing. At the very outset of his public career Berl had set himself the task of bringing about the unification of all the Labor Zionist groups. Codification was an automatic by-product of his success in this task. Each of the several groups that came together to form Mapai brought with it its own ideological trappings, but Mapai as a whole embodied their point of "confluence" rather than of conflict. Berl reflected this "confluence" in all his writings and discourses. If there was little of Borochov in his eclectic system (perhaps only the latter's affirmation of the value of the Yiddish *folkskultur* of the *golah*), there was a great deal of Syrkin (yet none of Syrkin's contempt for the *golah* Jew), and even more of Gordon (the religion of labor, the moral regeneration of man, deference to tradition).

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JUDD L. TELLER here concludes his discussion of the thought and personalities of the men who shaped the faith of Israel's present governing class. His article last month dealt with the ideas of Nachman Syrkin, Ber Borochov, Joseph Chaim Brenner, and A. D. Gordon. He now turns to Berl Katznelson, who synthesized the various concepts of the past into today's prevailing political philosophy, and whose weight in Labor Zionism may be partly measured by the fact that at every moment of crisis in Israel there are many who say, "If only Berl were alive. . . ." Mr. Teller then goes on to discuss in what ways the present political and moral crises of the new state can be illuminated by a glance at the past. Mr. Teller, born in Poland in 1913, studied at the Teachers Institute of Yeshiva College in New York, at the City College of New York, and at Columbia University. He is closely acquainted with the Zionist movement both in this country and in Israel.

BERL KATZNELSON was a gadfly to international Zionism. In the early 1920's he anticipated many of the issues that now trouble the relations between Israel and the world Zionist community. "The Zionist parties in all of Eastern Europe have become local bourgeois parties with all the appurtenances which characterize this type of party. . . . But Palestine's problems are today no longer those which agitated [previous] Zionist Congresses. Today's problems involve the interests of authentic humanity, of groups of men and women already in Palestine or clamoring for admission to it. The leadership and the solutions cannot be left to fortuitous skills and circumstances. They require a profound knowledge, an unerring intuition of Palestine's social structure, the forces in her and the interests, her finances and agriculture. . . . Is it proposed that problems such as these be handed over to men recommended by nothing more than their affiliation with parties abroad? Our public has nothing but contempt for the vacuous, ostentatious, and tumultous type of Zionist, and derision for aliens who come to rule, order, and command here in the name of Zionism."

The issues are the same today, only the roles are reversed. Then it was the Palestine pioneer who claimed that he was being disregarded by the Zionist movement. Now it is the Zionist movement that complains of being disregarded by the new state. The pioneers' demand for home rule revealed their impatience with foreign counsel, however expert; this impatience is still a habit in Israel, and it supports labor's claims to the right to shape the new country's future.

But this man, who was such a firm champion of home rule for the Jewish pioneers of Palestine vis-à-vis the rest of the Zionist movement, was also a passionate advocate of the continuity of Jewish culture and traditions. Katznelson obviously did not share Syrkin's vision of a new society that would



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jettison "obsolete" Talmudic Judaism. Disturbed by the tendency of the "state en route" to exalt itself at the expense of *golah*, he reminded the Second Aliyah that it had been "well equipped for its journey to Palestine" with the rich traditions of the Diaspora, and that "not everyone had had the same privilege of an upbringing near the very springs of Jewish life."

This theme ran until the end through all Berl's speeches, writings, and works. In a speech delivered during the war he said: "Even without indulging in close analogies between the two spiritual worlds—our own and that of preceding Jewish generations—it can be said with firm certainty that they were endowed with greater moral fortitude. We have been conditioned to imagine the ghetto Jew as a bent and sycophantic creature, devoid of dignity, cringing and groveling before his tormentors. We have been accustomed to counterpose to him the emancipated Jew—the banker, doctor, lawyer, and statesman, free and poised men to their last inch. The reverse is true. . . . The ghetto Jew, that slinking, whipped dog, always cherished within himself the pride of royal purple: he was the son of kings, an exiled prince. . . . The emancipated Jew, on the other hand, who had broken out from bondage into freedom, from confinement into space, was furtive and shuffled along as if saddled with a hump. . . . He acquired the right to vote, but he lost the feeling of being one of the elect. . . . Even as he scrambled from rung to rung up the ladder of his success, he was always aware that he was only a worm, a repulsive Jewish worm, and that sooner or later a boot would descend and crush him."

THE Zionist effort in Palestine between the two world wars was a controlled experiment—largely, and inadvertently, because of the character of British cooperation. The very low Jewish immigration quota granted the Zionist Executive forced the Zionists to select carefully among the applicants for immigration certificates. None must be wasted. The trained *halutz* seemed the safest person in whom to invest these certificates, the one surest to stay and work. His type was established in Palestine by the Third Aliyah, which began arriving right after 1918. While still at home the trained *halutz* had come under the influence of one or another of the Labor Zionist groups, had been introduced to its doctrine, and trained for agricultural work under conditions approximating those he would meet in Palestine. There were Gordonists among these *halutzim* and all kinds of socialists, and in Palestine they established *kvutzot, kibbutzim,* and *moshavim,* all manner of communes and cooperatives. This kind of pioneering required the individual to adjust himself to the group, suppress his aggressive instincts, and devote himself wholeheartedly to work for the common weal.

Then came the influx of refugees from Hitler, while the British continued to refuse to relax immigration controls; along with this, three years of systematic Arab violence. It was Berl who led the fight to get Zionist Congress approval for illegal immigration. The struggle was no longer with the hard soil, but with man, and it called for all the techniques of underground warfare. But this kind of activity put a premium on aggressiveness, and some arrogant young men received important assignments in a struggle that had to be waged by heroes, not by saints. What would be the ultimate consequence? Berl was apprehensive and expressed his apprehensiveness at a conference of labor youth leaders in 1940; on that occasion he spoke against a proposal that a course be given in the history of underground movements in order to inspire young people by examples drawn from the revolutionary past.

Berl asked: where would this course begin, and what moral could it offer? "The early Christian martyrs were heroes, but so were those whom Christianity martyred. What [moral] safeguards could such study provide? Had the nobleness of the socialist underground [under Bismarck] been a guarantee [against the collapse] of the free socialist movement in Germany? The Russian socialist underground movements were amply endowed with idealism, heroism, self-sacrifice, yet Russia had not been spared civil war, rivers of blood, new fetters, new treasons, and the need for a new underground. . . . Knowing of these many misfortunes, have we the right to offer our youth the theater of romantic adulation instead of the bread of ideological, political, sociological, and cultural self-criticism?"

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It was obvious by the end of World War II that immigration would take precedence over colonization in the Zionist effort. Labor unity within Mapai, and with Hashomer Hatzair, which stayed outside Mapai, was based on the controlled experiment of colonization under the leadership and ideals of labor. Now a new basis for unity was required, and the search for it revived some of the old differences, as each group turned to its sacred scriptures for guidance.

Ben Gurion, a leader of the Jewish Agency Executive even before the war, and general secretary of the Histadrut for many years before that, now came into his own. A propagandist, a capable organizer, a tough in-fighter, alert to any opportunity that might benefit his own side, he was well able to direct and channel the aggressive drives of the Labor Zionist rank and file in Palestine.

He proposed that the Zionist movement press for immediate sovereignty in Palestine. He was opposed by a leftist group—now Mapam—which demanded that the struggle be confined to the demand for uncontrolled immigration. Both Ben Gurion and the leftists agreed that guerrilla warfare should be counted on as a possibility if all other means failed in the struggle for their different aims. Ben Gurion's public reasoning was this: the Mandatory government would never permit the uncontrolled immigration which was European Jewry's greatest immediate need; Jews had to acquire state power in order to open Palestine to Jewish immigration; since uncontrolled immigration could not be won without Jewish statehood, the struggle must focus on that. The leftists argued, however, that the struggle for immigration would enlist worldwide sympathy, "expose the nature of imperialism," and thereby force the British to yield; while a struggle for statehood would result, at best, in a freak state that would be too small to contain immigration, and that, because it was attached to the British colonial empire, would also be a tool of imperialism.

The doctrinal motivations of each of these positions were never stated precisely, yet they seem obvious. Ben Gurion's was an uncomplicated Herzl-Syrkin approach: only a sovereign Jewish state could solve the Jewish problem; never had that problem been more acute than in 1945; never had a state been more necessary. The leftists believed in historical determinism: socialism was the only solution for mankind, yet socialism could not be operative for the Jewish people unless they were gathered together on their own ancestral territory; the most urgent problem therefore was not statehood, but immigration and territorial concentration. The processes of history had already begun to destroy the British Empire in India and would eventually do the same to British rule in Palestine.

This doctrinal division led even then to friction between Ben Gurion and a large sector of the *kibbutzim* movement (the sector that later joined Mapam). The leftists drew their strength primarily from the architects of the controlled experiment, the *kibbutzniks* whose attention for more than two decades had been concentrated on their little utopias, and who had therefore become insensitive to the urges and responses of the larger community. The urban workers, the white-collar people, and the Histadrut bureaucracy from whom Ben Gurion drew his primary support were part of that larger community.

How had the founding fathers of Labor Zionism anticipated and dealt theoretically with all these, and other, momentous present-day problems?

Syrkin, like Herzl, had been confident that the Jews would voluntarily converge on Palestine and settle there in response to their awakened nationalism. Borochov maintained that this would happen only after the Jews had been rejected elsewhere and had no other alternative; then Jewish immigration to Palestine would follow automatically. Israel has been waiting for sizable voluntary immigration from the United States, or the "Western countries," to give her the skills that she so direly needs. But she has waited in vain. Most Israelis are ready to concede that none of the large-scale waves of immigration to Palestine since the 1880's would have materialized had the immigrants had any real hope for a future in their countries of origin. Thus Borochov saw this issue more correctly than Syrkin.

Borochov was convinced that the rejection and economic extrusion of Jewry would be worldwide. He generalized from the environment he knew best, East Europe, whose minorities were assertive and where the Jew-

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ish middleman was being squeezed by his state-encouraged Gentile competitor. But industrialized America neither woos nor extrudes its minorities; it absorbs them. The middleman over here is not an independent creature easily identifiable by his isolation; he is rapidly becoming the anonymous agent of anonymous corporations, hence unidentifiable with a race, religion, or any other non-economic entity.

As regards the new state's relations with the Diaspora, Syrkin's ideas seem to have won out. There is, for instance, the popularity in Israel of "Canaanism." Not so long ago Ben Gurion himself drew a distinction between Midrashic and Biblical Judaism that Syrkin had borrowed from radical Reform Judaism. This distinction is certainly opposed to Berl Katznelson's view of the continuity of Jewish tradition in Palestine. However, the battle Berl led for home rule for the Palestinian pioneers within the framework of the Zionist movement seems to have been definitively won—though this victory has encouraged the exaggerated self-esteem he warned against.

Syrkin's vision of a federation of producers' cooperatives as controlling the economy of the Jewish commonwealth seems to have been realized appreciably, as has also his vision of villages mixing agriculture and industry. But he could not foresee that self-employed stockholders would clash one day with their non-stockholding employees, with the general public, and even with their parent body, Histadrut—as the transportation cooperatives in Israel have. Nor did he foresee the bureaucracy that would encrust part of this cooperative empire. In fact, he hardly foresaw a civil service at all, except in his plan under which men of merit would be summoned to the capital for special temporary duty and then return home to their village communities. This plan was actually realized on frequent occasions in the old pre-statehood days. Men like Joseph Baratz of Dagania, often summoned to public service, never thought of this as their permanent work, and remained rooted in their *kvutzot* or *kibbutzim*. But this outlook is becoming less and less frequent, though many still hold to it—more in Mapam than in Mapai.

The conflicts and quarrels inside the *kibbutzim* have raised the question: how is this possible in utopia? The answer may have been given in Brenner's portrait of the Second Aliyah: ". . . stubborn and given to harsh language," always inclined "to indict, arraign and condemn . . . and to grade all people." It may be explained also in the light of Gordon's warning that socialism began from the wrong end, that the true reformation of society depended on a prior reformation of man, and that even if socialism were installed, "no sooner was the honeymoon over than everything would relapse into its old state." Gordon had, in fact, foreseen the present conflicts when he warned the Second Aliyah against "mass hypnosis," against surrendering one's individual judgment to a party or a leader. Nevertheless, the veterans of the Second Aliyah in the *kibbutzim* continue to represent some of the finest qualities of Labor Zionism. The real crisis in Israel lies elsewhere.

A NEW generation and, with it, a new type of personality seem to have taken over in the past half-decade. This type is not universal in Israel, but it is widespread: it is exemplified by men and women in their late thirties or early forties few of whom are sabras and most of whom belong to the hybrid *aliyot* that followed the Third Aliyah. This element advanced to power at a time when an emergency called for their aggressive drive and the religion of labor gave way to physical heroism. The individuals of this type are called "*chevreman*" in Israeli slang; the term was laudatory in the years of underground struggle, but it is no longer that in today's Israeli vernacular. The chief task of the *chevreman* —universally, in every land—is ostensibly to help keep his party intact, but the fact is that he generally ends up by taking it over. Gordon warned against this species: "Their status as . . . administrators . . . develops in each of them a consciousness of self, the wrong kind of consciousness of self . . . the kind that feeds on the weakness of others."

Israel is only five years old, and she is exactly what a new state under the given conditions might be expected to be. Yet her doctrines have committed her to greater, more remarkable things. Many in Israel, especially the sabras, have become loud in their distaste for the new elite of the *chevreman*. Youth publications have been searching for greater "substance, meaning." However much sabra youth may falter and err,

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it is bound to stumble across some of the forgotten early doctrines. Perhaps what is lacking most in Israel today is a teacher—an eclectic like Berl Katznelson, a codifier of doctrine, a Rashi to reinterpret for the young the ideals and doctrines of the Second Aliyah.

MAPAI and Mapam have divided between them the legacy of Labor Zionism's founding fathers, each party choosing what seemed most pertinent to its needs, aims, and experience, and synthesizing these in a new program. The fathers, were they living today, would undoubtedly be distressed by the arbitrariness with which their ideas have been handled.

Mapam's rigid and dogmatic sectarianism, its acute class-consciousness, its tenacious faith in the possibility of a mechanistic reorganization of society, and its excessive tolerance of Soviet Communism would have profoundly shocked A. D. Gordon, who abjured class warfare and rejected any attempt to set international class loyalties above the regeneration of the Jewish people. As for Mapai—although it sends delegates to international congresses and its leaders occasionally succumb to socialist oratory, nobody takes its socialist commitments too seriously. Mapai's vocabulary is the result of early conditioning, and is put to use only when needed for the purpose of competing with Mapam's inflammatory radicalism. Mapai does not think in class terms, and operates more like an American farmer-labor party, as a coalition of moderately liberal-to-radical elements. Above all, it drives towards that national cohesion which Gordon advocated. But it fails him in other respects. He advocated the simple life, rural socialism, and personal dedication. What he envisaged was less a socialist society than a society of socialists. And that kind of society is best embodied in the *kibbutzim*. Since the split within Mapam's Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Mapai's *kibbutzniks* outnumber Mapam's, yet the general impression is that Mapai no longer has much relish for Gordon's "simple life." It may well be that if Mapam had been in power as long as Mapai, it too would have begun to make such an impression.

If Mapam is still class-conscious, Mapai's bureaucrats are, by and large, caste-conscious, and Gordon could abide the one as little as the other. A caste-conscious elite seems incompatible with the religion of labor and incapable of the kind of personal dedication Gordon preached. The Mapai leaders are openly distressed by the fact that Mapam still holds a special attraction for many of the young people in Israeli, but this is not too difficult to understand. The party in power tends to attract careerists; a minority like the Hashomer Hatzair wing of Mapam, precisely because of its sterner demands upon the individual and the fewer promises of reward it holds out to him, is better able to attract idealists.

Mapam, committed though it is to Borochov, is in this one respect strongly Gordonist, laying great stress on the "personal covenant" as the only way to inspire a pioneer movement willing and able to conquer the wildernesses still within Israel's borders. Ben Gurion, too, would like to see such a pioneering movement, but in its absence he is confident that the army can do the task, and that state authority can supply what voluntary effort will not. Thus he subscribes in some measure, unconsciously, to that faith in the mechanistic process which Mapam is nominally committed to—but only nominally, since in action it invokes Gordon's ideals of voluntary self-sacrifice.

Mapam remains fiercely intolerant of religion in the best tradition of the *apikorsim* (freethinkers) of the *shtetl*. Nor does Mapai incline toward any positive gestures towards traditional Judaism, despite the religious loyalties of individual Mapainiks of the older generation. However, Mapai's people in the government and in Histadrut do defer to, if not espouse, Jewish religious feeling both inside and outside Israel—and they have been called appeasers and cowards for it. But such deference towards religion is certainly consistent with Gordon's and Katznelson's heritage. It was the latter who wrote that "Sabbath rest . . . [is] to me of supreme importance, involving the preservation of the race, social hygiene, and national, social, and cultural [significance]. . . ."

BEN GURION, it would seem, is relatively little inspired by the original teachings of Labor Zionism. He is said to have been amenable to Katznelson's influence during the latter's lifetime, but it was the influence of a brother, not a father. Berl is reputed to have been able often to check his impetuous-

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ness of word and deed—and also to have impressed upon him the necessity of unity within the labor movement. "From my earliest days here," Berl wrote, "I have had an 'obsession' about eliminating the differences between workers." After Berl's death, Mapai split irreparably and the blame for this is laid at Ben Gurion's door. But he is also known to have made efforts to repair the split, efforts that his friends say were sincere. Mapamniks say they were not.

Ben Gurion has certainly not shown any sort of sweet reasonableness like Katznelson's in his dealings with opponents throughout his political career. Another thing he lacks that Katznelson had is a deep attachment to all facets of the Galut's cultural tradition, whether it was Yiddish literature or the Talmud. Ben Gurion's occasional pronouncements on Midrash or Yiddish always arouse a furor abroad. Primarily a politician, and a man intent on the things by which a nation establishes its power—he recently described the state as "bread, military power, and culture"—he has none of Gordon's moral fervor. Gordon was a social prophet, Ben Gurion is a patriot. Nor can Borochov's scientific theories appeal to a man of his temperament.

He may be said to have drawn his inspiration as a Zionist primarily from Herzl and—strange as it may seem—from Vladimir Jabotinsky, the Revisionist leader. In the 1930's Ben Gurion risked his whole political future by seeking to get labor's endorsement for an agreement with Jabotinsky. Like Herzl, Ben Gurion has indicated, or implied, that he sees himself in the role of a Deliverer. Like Jabotinsky, he appeals primarily to patriotic feelings. In common with Herzl and Jabotinsky, he has a flair for theatrics. Herzl had come from a Central European assimilated milieu. Jabotinsky began his career as a Russian liberal journalist with no knowledge of either Hebrew or Yiddish. Ben Gurion, although he comes from the Pale, cannot be said to have much deeper roots than they in Jewish folk culture.

Until his election to the Jewish Agency Executive, Ben Gurion was not too well known among Zionists abroad. He was more a "Yishuv regionalist" than a Zionist properly speaking, and when the Yishuv became a state he naturally became its first Prime Minister. Labor Zionism gave a nationalist movement a universalist direction. Chaim Weizmann, though not a socialist, regarded the Jewish state as incidental to a larger vision. Mapam claims to be still pursuing a universalist goal, but actually it has strayed off into ideological regionalism. Ben Gurion's ultimate vision, blurred by ecstatic rhetoric, is closer to Garibaldi's than to universal Jewish experience. He recently advised Hebrew writers to "revitalize" and "actualize" the Bible, treat the Song of Songs as a virile testament of love, Samson as a "real tough guy," and to avoid Midrashic allegory. Yet all Labor Zionist doctrine—from Moses Hess through Borochov and Gordon—is in effect Midrash. That what Ben Gurion counterposes to Midrashic allegory is not a superior realism, was made evident when he told those same Hebrew writers that they must remember that the Jewish people was "not two thousand years old, but much older."

Since the decline of Weizmann, and the dissolution of Palmach and Irgun—the underground armies whose rise paralleled Weizmann's eclipse—Ben Gurion's authority has gone virtually unchallenged. The only exception is the indirect challenge offered by the relatively obscure rabbi, Hazon Ish, survivor of an earlier Talmudic culture. And this challenge was largely in Ben Gurion's own mind, because that late rabbi's spell worked only upon a few thousand Jews in Israel, and even less in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, crumbling fortress of an obsolete Orthodoxy. Yet this group, although minute, has been impervious to Ben Gurion's influence, and his pilgrimage to Bnai Brak to convince the rabbi, on theological grounds, of the rightness of the women's conscription bill, was a demonstration of the ex-Prime Minister's conceit, his flair for the histrionic, and his overwhelming fascination with the rabbi's peculiar authority. Gordon, too, possessed such authority and, in some measure, Berl Katznelson did; it is of another nature and of another source than Ben Gurion's own. This strange pilgrimage to Bnai Brak may indeed have been the seed of Ben Gurion's recent decision to retreat to Kibbutz Sdeh Boker. Should Ben Gurion, with the collaboration of the Israeli press and his own party, succeed in this unconscious effort to recast himself as the Hazon Ish, Israel will have lost its most capable practical politician.

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# A FAMILY OF FOUR

*A Story*

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

MARTHA and Joe Shur walked along the bay for an hour before they decided to take the apartment. They had seen so many and decided against so many that it was hard to be sure any more. It was always the older Mrs. Shur who found the flaws. The ceilings were too low or the foyer was too small. The tiles might be broken in the bathroom or the walls might have cracks. "It isn't as if you didn't have a place to stay," she would remind them. Sunday after Sunday they would come home with nothing accomplished. It was easier to decide without her. They paid their deposit and signed the agreement. Then for a while they walked around the flat field, overgrown with tall sweet-smelling weeds and swamp grass, where the new apartments were to be built.

Joe's mother had hoped all along that they would include her in their plans. For weeks they had wavered back and forth, undecided, and then they had decided that she could live with them, but as soon as they talked about it Martha knew that it would be unbearable and she had cried so much about it that Joe had given in. Meanwhile the older Mrs. Shur did not know what they thought or planned. She waited nervously for them to decide.

She did not hide her disappointment when they told her. "It won't make any difference," she said. "We'll see each other a few times a week anyway. You can't get rid of a mother so easy. But you'll be sorry when you have a little one that I'm not closer. And it's a terrible waste of money to pay two rents. But do what you want, don't let me tell you."

They watched their house go up as eagerly as those in the suburbs watched their bungalows take form. They came back week after week to see what the bulldozers and derricks had accomplished even after the weeds were dry and dead and they could see the garbage, empty bottles, and old tires strewn all over the lots. They knew which windows were theirs.

The last few months together were difficult for Martha and her mother-in-law. The tensions that had been hidden for two years suddenly could be borne no longer. They quarreled about the lights and the dishes and the housework and then made up with tears and kisses. "You worked all day, go sit down and take a rest," Mrs. Shur urged Martha when she offered to help in the evening. But as soon as the girl did sit down the woman showed resentment.

The evenings were quiet. "When you're eating, eat," Mrs. Shur would say. "Later you'll talk." But when they were done Joe would nap on the living room couch, his mother would do the dishes alone, and Martha would cut pictures of furniture and recipes from the magazines she bought.

The baby was to arrive a month after they moved in. The days moved slowly, anxiety, excitement, and anticipation each taking its turn. But time passed and the furniture was bought, the clothes accumulated in a frenzy of buying, and Mrs. Shur supervised the purchases. She knew about the quality of the fabric and the finish of the wood just as she knew how a suit should be made and how a dress should be finished inside. Martha could not argue. She was not permitted any mistakes. If she hesitated her mother-in-law

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"A FAMILY OF FOUR" is the sixth of SYLVIA ROTHCHILD's stories to appear in our pages. A native of Brooklyn, Mrs. Rothchild now lives in Sharon, Massachusetts, with her husband and three small children, and is well on her way to winning recognition as one of our distinguished short story writers.



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would insist on buying for her whatever she must have. Martha waited.

FOUR months later she woke in her own bed with a crib beside it. Joe called her from the kitchen. She heard him but she buried her face deep in the pillow. Then the baby cried and she jumped to pick him up. The door of the refrigerator slammed shut. Martha blinked when she came into the kitchen. The baby was on her shoulder, its moist young head wobbling as she walked. She carried a diaper and a bottle in her free hand.

"There's nothing for breakfast," Joe said.

"What do you want?" she asked.

She looked at her reflection in the mirror over the telephone table. Her hair was tangled around her face, her eyes puffed.

"What do you want?" she asked again.

"Some breakfast."

"There's eggs in the refrigerator. The cereal's in the closet. There's bread on the table."

"I don't want any eggs."

"The appetizing store was closed yesterday. It's closed Wednesdays."

"Then you should have gone on Tuesday," he said. He fixed his tie and ran a comb through his hair. His cheeks were pink from shaving. He looked young and handsome. He stood holding the doorknob, looking at her crumpled nightgown that hung loosely beneath her cotton housecoat.

"Aren't you going to kiss me goodbye?" she asked.

"Kiss the baby," he said sharply. "He takes all your time anyway."

The door shut behind him. The baby began to cry. Martha went to the refrigerator for a bottle but found they were all gone. She left him to scream in his crib and began to gather together the milk, corn syrup, and water for the formula. She read the directions carefully. She read them every single time and wondered why she could not remember from one time to the next. Then she thought the infant was holding his breath and she ran to the crib to get him. Then she couldn't remember which of the ingredients she had put in the bowl and whether she had measured them properly. The bottles steamed in the sterilizer and the nipples were disintegrating while she hunted for the tongs that she had dropped behind the stove. "Shut up!" she shouted at the baby and she realized that she was crying too. Finally she held him while she poured the milk into the bottles. He sucked on her shoulder hungrily and fell asleep before the bottles were ready.

Martha had a work schedule posted in the kitchen. She had copied it from a magazine. It told her when to make the beds and sweep and cook the supper. At three o'clock she had finished her chores. The apartment was dusted and swept, the baby's clothes were washed, the supper prepared, and the kitchen in order. Stephen slept on his stomach in his carriage, ready to go outdoors. Martha brushed her hair. It hung to her shoulders. She pulled her jacket down. It was tight and she couldn't button the top of her skirt, but she didn't look very different from the girl in the tinted wedding photograph that hung over the living room couch. She put the last blanket in the carriage and turned it so that she could get it out of the door.

The buzzer rang and Martha opened the little metal peephole to see who it was.

"It's me! Open up, it's me!" said Mrs. Shur.

HER arms were full of brown paper bags. "How are you and how's my little boy? How's my darling little boy?" She put the bags on the kitchen table and went to the carriage.

"I was just taking him out," Martha said.

"Now, three o'clock you're taking him out? The sun is gone. He should be out twelve o'clock, not now. What's the good of dragging him out now?"

"I wasn't ready at twelve o'clock," Martha said. "I just got finished. I have to go to the store. Do you want to wait here or do you want to come with me?"

"You're taking him out like this? What's the matter, you're out of your head? This isn't July. Where's the woolen hat I bought

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him? I didn't buy it, it should lay in a drawer. You call that a hat, it's no thicker than a handkerchief."

"It's seventy-five degrees outside. I'm just wearing a thin suit. He doesn't need a woolen hat."

"What's the degrees? It's April. It's changeable outside. In a minute it's bitter cold. Listen to me. I raised a child already."

"Look, I'll be back in a minute. Why don't you just relax? I'll be back before it's bitter cold."

"Go then, but leave the baby with me."

"No, I want to take him. It took me an hour to fix the carriage and dress him. It's just for a few minutes."

"What are you going to buy?"

"Whatever I need."

"Why are you such a stubborn child? You don't need anything. Whatever you need, I brought you. Come, look here. For supper tonight I brought you a chicken soup with barley like Joe likes and the chicken naturally and for tomorrow there's pot roast with vegetables. All you have to do is heat it up. And here's some chopped herring and an apple pie. I even found a piece of belly lox, white and fat as butter. You can't buy such quality here. The stores are too fancy. And a pumpernickel and some onion rolls for breakfast. So what do you have to buy? I even brought a jar of chicken fat."

Martha stood at the carriage and watched her mother-in-law spread the bags over the table and chairs. "Why do you bring so much?" she asked. "You don't have to bring all this stuff. I made supper already. We don't need it. Why do you bring things all the time? I don't ask you to."

"Look, Miss Independence, I'm a mother. You don't have to ask me to bring. I don't come here with empty hands. Tell me what did you cook for supper?" She did not wait to be told. She lifted the covered dish on the stove, sniffed, and asked, "What is this? You could throw it away and never miss it."

Martha's head throbbed. She bit the inside of her cheek till it bled. "It's a salmon-noodle casserole."

"And that's a supper?"

"There's fruit-jello salad and antipasto in the refrigerator." She had suspended the fruit in lime jello. Each cherry was fixed. The peaches formed a star.

"Look darling, you can learn now that you can't nourish a man on salmon noodles and jello. That you can eat for lunch tomorrow. My son needs a rich soup, a thick piece of meat. No wonder he looks like he does. I'll be glad to bring it, if you can't make it. And it won't hurt the little one either. In another month a few spoons of soup is a hundred per cent better than all the cans in the store."

"I'm going out," Martha said. "I'll be back soon."

"I talk and you don't listen. You can't take a baby out like that. You're fit to be a mother like I'm fit to be President. You're a baby yourself."

MARTHA took her hand off the doorknob. The baby stirred in the carriage. "I don't need you to tell me what to do," she said shrilly. "Just leave me alone. Keep your stuff and leave me alone."

"That's a fine thank-you. For this I was at the butcher at eight o'clock in the morning. For this I traveled an hour on buses to come here. I didn't expect such a thank-you."

"Look, please stop. I don't want to hurt your feelings."

"You please stop," she shouted. "Stop being such a baby and grow up. What have I done to you you're so bitter against me? I did you some harm? I came to see your baby? I brought you good things to eat? For this, you say please stop?"

"All I want to do is go out for a few minutes. I haven't been out for two days. I didn't know you were coming. I didn't expect you. I'll be right back."

"You didn't expect me. I need a formal invitation. At least I should have the privilege to sit in the chairs I bought you. Or is that too much to ask?"

"Mother, what you gave us is ours now. You didn't take a mortgage out on me," Martha said desperately and then added lamely, "You could call me up. It would

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only take a minute to say you're coming."

"I know you're home. Where would you go with a little baby? For the price of a call I'm on a bus and I'm here, even if you're not so anxious to see me."

"Please understand me. I want to do things for myself. I want to learn how to cook and how to keep house. I was working until six months ago. Why can't you give me a chance?"

"I don't give you a chance? My only pleasure is to help you. What have I but Joey and you and the baby? What are my pleasures? You're my only pleasure. For what do I live but to see you happy? And for this I get 'take your stuff and leave me alone . . . don't mortgage me.' Is this words to give a mother? Is that what you want to hear from Stephen? You can take my word that however you treat me, so exactly he will treat you. Remember that."

The baby squirmed in the carriage and began to cry. "Oh my little bird, my sweet little bird," the older woman crooned. She pulled the covers back and touched his diaper. "Wet," she said, "wet as a cat," and still crooning she said, "Don't cry, little heart, your mama will take off her suit and put on an apron and take care of my best love." She opened the cotton hat and unbuttoned the soft blue sweater.

Martha hurried to the bathroom. She shut the door behind her and stood in front of the mirror, panting as if she had been chased. She blew her nose and threw cold water on her face. When she came out the baby was half naked. His grandmother had powdered him. He kicked his heels and grinned. His face was bland and unconcerned. He looked just like his father.

"You're still wearing your jacket?" her mother-in-law asked. "Oh my, look what you did to it." There were dark semi-circles under the armpits. "Why don't you wear shields? Why should you sweat so much, it's not so hot today."

Martha didn't answer her. She replaced the baby's diaper and said, "All right, you take care of him. I'll be back soon."

"It's a pleasure," sang the grandmother. "It's a pleasure to play with my little love."

MARTHA waited impatiently for the elevator. She jumped in quickly when it stopped, wary of the unpredictable door. She read the scribblings carved into the mahogany paneling and shrugged her shoulders. It was a brand new house. Some parts of it weren't even finished yet and already somebody had scribbled. Outside she walked carefully between the carriages, tricycles, and wagons. The street was full of children. The mothers knitted, gossiped, and read, seated all along the house and the play area behind it. She didn't see anyone she knew. She looked in the bakery window, but remembered the pumpernickel and apple pie. She stopped in front of the drygoods store and looked at the blouses and gloves and the baby clothes. She hesitated a moment and went in. Martha watched a woman who wanted a pink over-the-shoulder bag for bottles. The storekeeper had taken out a large variety, blue, black, and green, but the woman waited for a pink one. "It's not practical," the salesgirl said.

"Look, I asked for pink, do you have it? I want something different, something different and pretty. These are very ordinary. If you don't have it, say so."

The salesgirl gathered the bags together. "You want a diaper and bottle bag. What could be so different about a bottle bag? You can't expect a Paris creation for four dollars."

"Never mind," the young woman said petulantly. "I'll look around a little more."

Martha tried to attract the salesgirl's attention but she began to wait on a young woman with a little boy in a carriage. The young woman's mother came into the store and said, "You're still here?"

"I want some sleepers with the feet for a two-year-old boy," the young woman said.

"A size four should be all right. Is that the baby?" the salesgirl asked pointing to the boy.

The mother nodded and the boy strained at the harness.

"Take a six," the grandmother said.

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The salesgirl held up the pajamas so that the young mother could see. She hesitated, not so much because the decision was so difficult, but rather as if she was in the habit of hesitating. "I need two," she said. "I think a blue and a green."

"The fours?" the salesgirl asked again.

"Take a six," the grandmother persisted. "He'll outgrow."

"Four," the young woman said. "A four will be all right."

The older woman tapped her daughter's elbow, "Listen to me," she said. "Take my advice."

The daughter turned to Martha. "Listen to her. Did you ever hear anything like it? Why don't I take a size twenty, maybe a forty-two would be good too? For Godsakes, if he outgrows it I'll throw it away and get another. Do you understand? All my life I didn't own a thing my size because of her. Nothing was ever bought for now. What do you want from him?"

"I only said he's growing fast. Before you know, he'll outgrow." She said it meekly but stubbornly.

"Take a four and a six," the salesgirl said. "You can bring it back if it isn't good."

The older woman sighed. The younger shook her head angrily.

Martha bought some stockings and followed the quarreling mother and daughter out of the store. They bickered and fought all the way home, not for any new reasons but to punish each other for old grievances. Listening to them somehow made Martha feel better.

Before she came into the house she decided what she must do. I won't pay any attention, she told herself. I just won't pay any attention to her.

WHEN she opened the door she found her mother-in-law sprawled on the couch with the baby. He pulled her glasses and held a clump of her hair in his hand. He kicked his feet and squealed with delight.

*Joe came in at six.* The soup was simmering on the stove. His mother fed the baby a bottle. He kissed Martha in the kitchen. "I'm sorry about this morning," he said sheepishly. "I brought you a sample sweater." He hung up his jacket and squeezed her again. "Were you sore at me all day?" He shrugged his shoulders to show that he didn't plan to talk about it any more. "When did Mother come?" he asked.

"She brought a lot of stuff for supper and she came at three o'clock," Martha said. "I already cooked some. What do you want?"

"Gee, I don't care," he said. "I meant to tell you we had a big party today for the bookkeeper who's getting married and I don't want any supper. A cheese sandwich'll be enough."

When the baby was asleep they sat down together. Mrs. Shur had the soup she had brought, Joe his sandwich, and Martha the salmon she had prepared.

"Joey, eat something," his mother begged. "I didn't carry it here for myself."

"Tomorrow, Ma," he said. "Tomorrow's another day. Did you see the sweater I brought Martha? It's a fifteen-dollar sweater. It's a sample."

"If you're eating, eat," she said. "You'll talk later."

Martha carried the first forkful to her mouth and the baby began to cry.

"How they know," the grandmother said. "Just sit down to eat and they know already. I'll go hold him," she said. "You eat, Martha."

But Martha jumped up before her. "Your soup'll get cold," she said. She came back in a minute with the infant on her shoulder. She propped him up high and held him with her ear and her left hand.

"That's the way I used to eat when you were little," the grandmother said to her son. "How the sight reminds me." She crumpled some crackers into her soup and said, "Well, here we are, the four of us all together. The soup is good, Joey. You should try some."

They ate silently. The baby snored vaguely. The milk he regurgitated trickled down the back of Martha's dress and he was warm and wet where his blanket touched her breast.

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# FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

## MAINE PASTORAL, WITH DUCK

*"Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow . . . ."*

TOBY SHAFTER

"AND how is the duck today?"

That was my mother on the telephone, making the same daily inquiry, at exactly the same time of day, of her friend Mrs. Klein.

"The duck is still tied up in the cellar? Then you're still going down the cellar to feed it. Such a bother. Well, goodbye."

With that, my mother placed the receiver firmly on the hook and returned to the kitchen where she was cooking a savory beef stew. The meat was mailed weekly from Bangor and had to be cooked immediately and long. My father was sitting at the kitchen table, horn-rimmed spectacles on the tip of his nose, immersed in the day-old Yiddish paper which came by mail from New York.

"Mrs. Klein has a duck in her cellar," my mother announced to my father as she stirred the thick barley soup flecked with parsley and carrots and added another pinch of pepper. "Some men bring home ducks, fish, everything."

"Didn't I run to the post office after the meat this morning?" my father said, and he hid himself completely behind the paper.

"Somebody gave Mr. Klein the duck for nothing," my mother pursued. "He gets lots of things for nothing."

"I don't know those *goyim*," my father said as he fled to his room to take a nap.

ON SATURDAY afternoons Mrs. Klein came to call on us with two other ladies. Mrs. Klein was a regal woman—a great beauty in her youth and beautiful in old age, too, with long white hair knotted in a graceful bun at the back of her head, setting off delicate features of cameo perfection. Mrs. Klein was always impeccably dressed in lavender prints or tasteful blues and no one would ever suspect from her queenly appearance that she had brought up five children with no help and taken in boarders in the early years of her marriage to make ends meet. Even now, though it was not necessary, she farmed a large piece of land in her back yard that provided her with all her summer's vegetables, and she canned a large part of its produce for winter use. I have never tasted anything better during the dank, dark winter days of coastal Maine than Mrs. Klein's succulent sweet corn, each kernel showing distinct and golden yellow through the shining glass jars in which she preserved them. Mrs. Klein's front yard was filled with a tangle of flowers and she had a pair of every conceivable fruit tree that would flourish in our harsh climate. But as far as I know, this was the first time she had attempted to keep livestock.

"And what do you feed the duck?" Mrs. Halpern, one of our Saturday afternoon visitors, inquired.

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A DUCK's life at best may not be very much, but Mrs. Klein's duck, benefiting from a fortunate concurrence of geography and the Jewish laws of *kashrut*, certainly did have it better than good, while it lasted. TOBY SHAFTER, who offered a more formal but perhaps no more searching picture of Jewish life in Maine in our issue of January 1949 ("The Fleshpots of Maine"), is a free-lance writer now living in New York. A native of Maine, she attended Simmons College in Boston and Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.



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Mrs. Klein shrugged her shoulders and answered, "What does a duck eat? A little of this. A little of that. I soak some bread in milk. I give the duck grain and water."

"A duck is not like a cat," my mother said. "A cat eats fish, bones, liver, chicken skin. I like a cat in the house." She beamed at our cat Boxer, who was circling in front of the company with arched back and thick, striped tail waving.

"My cat doesn't like the duck," Mrs. Klein offered. "I can't let the cat down the cellar and I have to tie up the duck. In the old days when Rock Harbor had a *shochet,* we would already have eaten the duck. Everything is over now—all the Jewishness."

"I remember when we kept chickens and the shochet came every Thursday to slaughter a chicken for the Sabbath." Mrs. Gross, who was indeed large, shuddered throughout her ample frame. "I'm glad those days are over. I couldn't stand the sight of those poor chickens flapping their wings and staggering about like drunks for ten or fifteen minutes after the shochet had slit their throats. I'd much rather get a nice, cleaned-out chicken from Portland than stand picking feathers half the day and then put my hands into its slimy insides." Mrs. Gross was firmly on the side of the more liberal faction in town.

"So what are you going to do with the duck?" my mother asked Mrs. Klein quickly, to prevent the discussion from developing into the touchy, never-ending argument on the respective merits of the old way and the new.

"I think I will fatten up the duck for Purim," Mrs. Klein answered with a serene smile. "Maybe my Lily will come with the children and we can all have a real feast. The only problem is to find a shochet for the duck."

Mrs. Halpern, a peppery little woman who could not resist a jibe, rose to this remark like a fish sighting a fly. "Ah, if you were only one of those who ate lobsters," she said, "then you would have no problem. Mr. Klein could take the duck out into the shed and chop off its head. That's what a Lobster-Eater could do."

"Oh, the Lobster-Eaters," the other ladies exclaimed in chorus, with my father adding a baritone counterpoint to the soprano voices. Mrs. Gross shut her lips in a straight line but said nothing.

MY FATHER sat back expansively in his chair as he prepared to tell one of his stories, unheedful of the warning look that my mother shot his way signifying that she had heard that particular story ten times. Well, she had heard all of his stories at least ten times.

"A long time ago," my father began, "there was one Jewish family in Waldoboro—the only Jewish family that ever lived there. They are both gone now—peace be with them. The man, he was a tailor, a very fine Jew indeed. They had two wonderful children. The daughter played the piano like an angel from heaven. Went to New York and married a fine young man. The son was a wonder. He was a street-cleaner in Thomaston, summers. Worked his way through college that way and became a famous doctor. Married into the Straus family—a cousin or a granddaughter. His mother and father were at the wedding and so was Nathan Straus. But the wife, now there was a lady!" My father's face crinkled with laughter.

"Well? Well? What happened? What's the story?" our guests urged my father on, for his stories were notable for their sardonic wit. But my father was not to be hurried. He licked his lips lightly, reached for his tall, steaming glass of tea, and thoughtfully put four heaping teaspoons of sugar and a thin slice of lemon in it.

"How a man can eat so much sugar, I don't know," my mother interposed in a tone of combat. "He will come down with diabetes yet."

My father stirred his tea slowly and resumed his story. "This lady in Waldoboro—and remember this was not now but then when Jews were careful about the house—this lady used to go shopping in the *goyishe* meat market (for what other kind of meat market was there in Waldoboro?) and buy meat for the family. There was a shochet in Rock Harbor then and when we heard about it, we took the shochet and a delegation of us observant Jews went to call on this lady. It was quite an undertaking in those days. Waldoboro is twenty miles away and the roads then were not as they are now. They were rutted and rough, and if it rained the horse and wagon would get bogged down in the mud. I took my horse and the shochet rode with me. Altogether seven of us went in three different wagons. Luckily, it was a

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sunny day but cold, so we took along a nice package of meat from that week's slaughter.

"She was pleasant enough and received us kindly with tea and cake. When we explained to her that the shochet in Rock Harbor had kosher meat and Jewish bread every week, she immediately bought the package we had brought with us and thanked us very much."

"So what do you want from the poor woman?" the ladies exclaimed in derision. "She started buying kosher meat from the shochet. She bought the meat, what more could you want?"

"Wait, ladies, wait. This is only the beginning of the story. She bought meat once. She bought meat twice. Then a long time passed. Winter came and we did not see her. One day in the spring I happened to be driving through Waldoboro with my horse and wagon and I saw her going into the butcher shop there—the *goyishe* butcher shop.

"I waited until she came out of the butcher shop with her bundle and then I offered her a ride home. One must be tactful in these matters. As we drove along with my horse going at a good clip—I had a wonderful horse in those days—I began questioning her. 'How does it happen,' I asked, 'that a fine Jewish woman like you buys meat in a *treife* butcher shop when you can get kosher meat from the shochet in Rock Harbor?'

"Do you think that lady was embarrassed? Not a bit. She looked me straight in the eye and it was easy to see that she was very pleased with herself. And this is what she said. 'Whenever I buy meat from a *goy,* I make it kosher. It really doesn't take long. I salt it and that only takes a few minutes and I can always do other things while the salt remains on the meat for the hour that it must. Then I fill a pail with water and soak it for about ten minutes and I am all through. It really isn't so much trouble as it would seem.'

"Just imagine," continued my father, "a thing like that! To get the rest of the story, I asked her what she did when she got meat from the shochet. Of course, all you ladies know that to be kosher, meat must be ritually slaughtered and the shochet must have a certificate from a chief rabbi and then it must be salted down for an hour and washed. It isn't kosher unless all these things are done. But this lady made up new laws as she went along. 'When I get meat from the shochet,' she said, 'it saves me a lot of work. That meat is kosher so I don't have to bother at all with making it kosher. I just put it in a pot and cook it.'"

Our lady visitors all rocked with laughter. Even my mother could not suppress a smile, but she felt it her duty to say warningly, "Remember what that young rabbi who came here to pray during the High Holidays said when you told him the story. He said you shouldn't make fun of that lady. She did make kosher the meat that she bought from the *goy* so she only committed one transgression. He said that if she had bought meat from a *goy* and not made it kosher it would have been a double transgression."

By this time the short winter afternoon was drawing to a close. In the gathering dusk, the last glimmers of light shot off bright pinks and green-blues in a spectacular sunset over the sea against the snowy background of a fir-covered island in the harbor. Soon it was dark and my mother busied herself about the kitchen setting out a supper of *gefilte fish* and vegetables, home-made *challeh,* strong coffee with rich country cream, and a heaping platter of cakes and strudel. Mrs. Klein sighed as she toyed with her food. "If only there was a shochet in Rock Harbor now, I would make good use of his services," she observed. "It's indifference that drove him away. In the old days I could have the duck slaughtered right away and have a wonderful dinner."

"It is hard to be a proper Jew in a forsaken place like Rock Harbor," my mother agreed sympathetically.

"Maybe the shochet in Portland will go to Bangor or the shochet from Bangor will step off the train on his way to Portland and make a stop in Rock Harbor to kill your duck and help you out," Mrs. Halpern suggested.

"You don't have to go through Rock Harbor to get from Portland to Bangor. You change trains in Brunswick," my father put in with an air of superior male knowledge. "There's no way to get from Rock Harbor to Bangor by train."

"But the buses run straight through," my mother said. "If the shochet traveled by bus from Portland to Bangor or from Bangor to Portland, what would it mean to him to stop off even if he did go a few miles out of his

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way? He would make himself quite a few dollars. Everybody could buy chickens from the farmers and Mrs. Klein would get her duck slaughtered."

"There aren't too many left in Rutland of those Jews who eat only kosher," Mrs. Halpern said, "but it would be nice for Mrs. Klein's duck if he stopped off."

"Why don't you write to both *shochtim* and ask them if either will be traveling down this way soon?" my mother suggested. "Perhaps one of them will do that."

"It's a good idea, a very good idea," the other ladies chimed in.

"I think I will do it," Mrs. Klein decided. "If I want to cook the duck for Purim, it is not too soon to start making arrangements for it now."

The repast finished and night well established, the ladies turned to the real business of their visit. My father brought the folding card table into the kitchen, although he always grumbled secretly in the other room about women and cards as he did it. He and my mother unfolded the legs and set it up as near the kitchen stove as possible. Then Mrs. Gross took her chair, which was the large solid oak one, while the other ladies arranged themselves about the table in their accustomed places. Mrs. Klein was my mother's partner and Mrs. Halpern was Mrs. Gross's. My father hovered around muttering under his breath but they were all too absorbed in the game to pay any attention to him. The four ladies waited patiently all Saturday afternoon, for it would have been a transgression of the Sabbath to play casino while there was still light in the sky. But when evening came, wild horses could not have kept them from the game. They turned to the casino game all the intense concentration that they had been saving for it all Saturday afternoon, and no word passed their lips that was not concerned with the game.

A WEEK—more or less—passed and Mrs. Klein called my mother. The weather had been bad. There was snow and sleet, and the cold dampness—as only Maine winter weather can be cold and damp—had kept everybody indoors and prevented the ladies from seeing each other.

"Yes, terribly nasty weather," I heard my mother agree over the phone. "The whole winter has been nasty. I don't remember another as bad as this." Then in a tone of interest and considerable agitation, "Yes, yes. You did! You don't say. The nerve! The *chutzpah!* I wouldn't do it if I were you. Let the duck live a while. It will get fatter."

My father was all ears and curiosity. "What's with the duck?" he asked excitedly. "If she can't get the shochet from Bangor or Portland, maybe someone from Boston will come." There was nothing that my father loved more dearly than a new Jewish face in town—someone who had not heard his fund of stories twice over and who would have anecdotes to exchange with him.

"The shochet in Portland thinks he's a prince," my mother said bitterly. "Thinks all the country Jews are made of money. If he comes to kill the duck, he wants Mrs. Klein to shower him with gold. She must pay his expenses back and forth—only by train or plane. And he wants a minimum guarantee of twenty-five dollars' worth of donations for his services. Now how many Jews will there be who will want chickens slaughtered in Rock Harbor, I ask you?"

"That's robbery," my father said. "Now an old-style shochet would come for the sociability and to do the townspeople a favor. It's all the fault of those newfangled rabbis we pay five or six hundred dollars to, just to come and pray for the three days of the High Holidays. All they do is shout 'page forty-five, page two hundred and three,' and give all the others fancy ideas about money. In the old days, a rabbi would come and help out our shochet during the High Holidays for thirty, forty dollars—including board of course. . . ." My father's voice trailed off into nothingness in speechless contemplation of the days that were gone.

My mother's thoughts were planted squarely in the present. "For that money, Mrs. Klein can order a duck and a chicken—maybe two—already picked and singed and cleaned," she announced firmly. "I'm going to call her up and tell her so."

THE first fair Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Klein came to call on us. She walked slowly and carefully into our yard, picking her way through the snow banks on either side of our hard-packed, icy walk. She came in through our kitchen door and settled herself heavily in the large oak chair, making no

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move to divest herself of her heavy storm coat.

"I hardly got here at all. The walking is terrible underfoot," she groaned.

"Come, come, let me take your coat, Mrs. Klein," my mother insisted, tugging at her sleeve.

"I must have been crazy to come. None of the other ladies would," Mrs. Klein continued. By then, my mother had captured half her coat and was pulling at the other sleeve.

"Have some hot tea with raspberry jam. It will warm you up," my mother urged Mrs. Klein.

"No. No tea, thank you. I just want to catch my breath. I'm an old lady, you know," Mrs. Klein said with a wan smile. "And I'm so worried about the duck. The duck is sick."

"What is the matter with the duck?" my mother and father asked simultaneously.

"The duck has a cold—I think," Mrs. Klein replied. "Probably caught it in the damp cellar. Its eyes are full of pus and it can barely walk."

"Too bad. Too bad," said my mother. "What are you doing for it?"

"If the duck wasn't so heavy, I would carry it into my summer kitchen. As it is, the duck lies there in the damp cellar and I do the best I can. I bring it good food—a little warm cream of wheat with milk one day—some white meat from the breast of the chicken the next day. I am trying to get it back in the best of health."

"You should try to get the Bangor shochet here as soon as you can to kill the duck before it dies," my father put in. Both women looked pained at the thought and there was a long silence.

"You are talking about a sick duck," my mother admonished him.

But my father was not to be deterred by feminine squeamishness. "Maybe the Bangor shochet can get a ride down with Mrs. Gross's son when he comes home a month from now. Have you heard anything at all from him, Mrs. Klein?"

"The Bangor shochet wrote that he would come when he can. He wants to get a ride, like you said. He'll charge me a dollar for slaughtering the duck."

"He shouldn't charge more than thirty-five cents, fifty cents at the most," my mother exclaimed indignantly. "What do they pay him in Bangor, I would like to know?"

"What can I do? I'm helpless in his hands," Mrs. Klein said in a resigned tone. "I'll just have to sit here and wait until he comes and pay him the dollar like he says."

"He won't charge me a dollar," my father put in. "I used to be friends with his uncle a long time ago."

"A lot of weight that will carry," my mother said. "You'll have to pay a dollar to have your chicken slaughtered like anyone else. You'll see."

Week after week passed. Purim came and and went. Mrs. Gross's son came from "down east," where he had settled, to spend a few days with his mother, but the shochet from Bangor did not arrive with him. The duck was nursed back to health on its invalid diet of hot gruel and white chicken. The ground was thawing with the first freshets of spring and the Saturday afternoon visits of the ladies followed by the evening meal and the card-playing became a thing of regularity.

"The duck must be getting fat," Mrs. Halpern remarked to Mrs. Klein during the afternoon phase while they were still making conversation with one another.

"The duck is so fat now it can hardly waddle," Mrs. Klein answered proudly. "And pure white. You never saw a duck so fat and so white."

"How else would a duck be in your hands, Mrs. Klein?" everyone said at once.

Mrs. Klein accepted the compliment graciously. "The duck talks to me. Greets me and says quack, quack, quack, every time I open the cellar door."

"So the shochet from Bangor never came," my father observed somewhat redundantly.

"No, he never came," Mrs. Klein replied vehemently. "If he didn't want to come, he should have said so and not led me on. My daughter and her family came here from Auburn and there was nothing to eat except what she brought with her for the children."

"Can you imagine nothing to eat at Mrs. Klein's house?" all the ladies chortled.

"Maybe the shochet will take the ride down with my Harry when he comes the next time—around Pesach," Mrs. Gross suggested.

"I don't want to rely on that shochet any longer. I was so disappointed that he didn't

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come in time so I could have the duck for Purim."

"It's even better for you to have the duck for Pesach," my mother consoled her. "For Purim, there are lots of good things to eat—*hamantashen,* cakes, cookies, milk, butter, cheese. And such good wine. But what can you have for Pesach? Again matzah and further matzah. And the same piece of meat over and over again. Now in the cities there are things to eat even during Pesach. Here if you give the milkman a can he will milk the cow directly into it. At least you tell him to do it, but who knows whether he really does or not? How can one tell how careful he is or what happens to the can between the time it is given to him and the time he brings it back full of milk? About what he gives the cow to eat during Pesach, I don't even dare inquire. And this is only by special arrangement and as a favor and for that I coddle him and give him hot coffee rolls every Friday morning throughout the year—except Passover week of course. Ah, in Europe one could watch these things—what the cow ate, how the *goy* milked her, and one took the warm can of milk back home oneself."

Having relieved herself of this soliloquy, my mother tilted forward eagerly the better to see the consoling effect of her words on poor Mrs. Klein.

MRS. KLEIN nodded slowly. "You are right, after all," she agreed. "It is much better to have the duck for Pesach when there is not so much to eat."

"What do you mean, there is not so much to eat for Pesach?" Mrs. Halpern challenged in her most peppery tone. "This year my Jake is going to drive the truck to Portland and buy everything for Pesach—cheese, butter, candy, Slivovitz, matzah meal, potato flour—even sponge cake, if I don't feel like beating out the eggs every other day of Pesach. There'll be so much to eat that we won't even feel it worthwhile to run after the milkman with our little tin cans," she added recklessly.

The other ladies were immensely impressed. Mrs. Halpern basked in the glory of their awe and admiration. It was not often that she gained such worshipful regard.

"If your Jake goes to Portland for the Pesach things, then Mrs. Klein can send her duck up with him to be slaughtered," my father, who had been silent all afternoon, rumbled loudly from his corner of the room.

"That's right, Mrs. Klein. You can send your duck to the shochet in Portland. It's a God-given opportunity. Such an inspiration." The ladies now all beamed at my father.

"How can a duck travel by truck? He will fly away," Mrs. Klein put in with a delicate shudder.

"Let the duck sit in the front with Jake," someone suggested.

"A duck doesn't sit still. He will get excited from the ride and peck my Jake's eyes out," Mrs. Halpern objected vociferously. "Nosiree, no duck is going to sit in the front seat with my Jake. I may even go to Portland with him myself, and don't tell me to hold the duck on my lap." She cast a baleful glance at the other ladies.

"Women, women, be still!" my father silenced them. "The solution to that problem is simple. Mrs. Klein can borrow a crate from one of the chicken dealers to put her duck in. Thousands of chickens ride to New York even every week in those crates. I see the trucks going by on the highway every day."

"My duck won't fit into a chicken crate. My duck is too big and fat for that," Mrs. Klein almost crowed.

Momentarily defeated, everyone sat in silence for a few moments. Suddenly, Mrs. Gross threw back her head and laughed her hearty laugh. "You can use the crib from a baby. It will make a perfect crate for a big, fat duck." She sat back and smiled at everyone in satisfaction.

"Who has a crib from a baby?" Mrs. Klein shrugged her shoulders. The other ladies looked at one another significantly. They knew that Mrs. Klein never threw anything away but preserved all the mementoes of her intimate life as if she were creating a shrine. "The crib that I have from my children, the grandchildren are using it now," Mrs. Klein added defensively. "The duck might dirty it on such a long trip. Then what would the grandchildren use?"

"I have a baby's crib. I will lend it to you for the day, Mrs. Klein, and your duck can ride up to Portland in it. To ride back he won't need it," Mrs. Gross offered magnanimously. "My grandchildren have their own cribs to sleep in, God bless them, right here in Rock Harbor." Everyone envied Mrs. Gross because her children had settled down

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right where they were born and brought up.

Amid loud acclaims and congratulatory laughter, Mrs. Klein weakly assented to the plan. There was a happy buzz in the air as they settled down to the casino game.

THE week before Passover came—early this year—and with it a stretch of deceptively springlike weather and the bustle of plans and preparations for the holiday. First, the house had to be cleaned—room by room—a little each day—until each corner from floor to ceiling was shining. Floors were waxed and furniture polished. Rugs were dragged out to air and hung across the porch railing and the clothesline to be beaten. Boxes of matzah and cartons of *farfel,* noodles, and other Passover edibles in jars and packages began to mount in an ever spreading heap in our front hall, well away from the everyday, all-year food that we were still eating. A special section of the cupboards was emptied and the Passover dishes were brought in from the barn attic, dusted, sorted, washed, and placed in readiness on the clear shelves. The stove—to be washed inside and out—was always left to the last day so that no *chometz* cooking would sully it.

With it all, my mother still found time to talk to her lady friends on the telephone, though personal visits were out of the question. When she spoke with Mrs. Halpern my father was always at her elbow urging her to mention again that when Jake drove to Portland to fetch Passover things, he wanted a bottle of well-aged plum brandy. From Mrs. Gross, she learned that the baby crib had been transported to Mrs. Klein's house by taxi.

"Mrs. Klein is so happy about it," my mother reported to my father. "She put the crib on her sun porch and brought the duck up from the cellar. It is a pleasure. The duck loves it. All that sunshine after weeks in the dark cellar! And in one corner of the crib, Mrs. Klein took an old quilt and made a nice bed for the duck and put in a little pillow, too. It is better for Mrs. Klein, too. She doesn't have to run up and down the steps to the cellar—a woman her age!"

"It won't be for long anyhow," my father remarked practically. "Jake Halpern is planning to go to Portland the day after tomorrow, and then Mrs. Klein will have roast duck for her Seder."

My mother winced slightly at his male indelicacy. Then, ignoring him, she went on, "Tomorrow, if I have the time, I think I may run over to Mrs. Klein's and look at the duck. I have practically everything all ready—and well beforehand—for the holidays. The fresh air will do me good."

MY MOTHER returned the next day from Mrs. Klein's in a happy glow. The mild weather had turned considerably colder and the nip in the air had reddened my mother's cheeks. "The walk did me good," she announced to my father, who had remained at home reading his Yiddish paper. "And such a duck Mrs. Klein has—a hero. So big. So fat. So white. And Mrs. Klein feeds him only matzah now. She dips it in a little milk first."

"Tomorrow all that will be over," my father said ominously. "The duck will ride to Portland on the truck. The shochet will take him in hand. He will flap his wings and squawk and quack as loud as he can, and then he will be served up on the table. I always did like a duck," he added, licking his lips appreciatively.

"So? So! Did you ever bring home a duck like Mr. Klein?"

WE ALL arose late the next morning. There was no sun. An unreal grayness enveloped the earth and sky. A swirling snowstorm that had begun during the night promised to become a bitter blizzard. Our small frame house shook with the howling of the wind and the cold seeped in at the window frames and doors. My father peered anxiously out of one window, my mother out of another.

"I wonder if Jake took his truck to Portland," my father said. "He was supposed to buy me some Passover brandy. Call Mrs. Halpern up and ask."

"Why don't you call?" was my mother's tart rejoinder.

"She's your friend. You call her," he coaxed. "Besides, I hate the operator. She sleeps all day—but most of all in the morning."

"I'll call," my mother replied, "but not just on account of your Passover brandy. You could do without it. I'm mostly interested in Mrs. Klein's duck. On a day like this, you shouldn't send out a dog."

My mother took the telephone off the

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hook and waited a goodly time before the operator chirped, in a lazy, down-east drawl, "Number please." My mother gave the number and after an interval we heard Mrs. Halpern's "Hello, hello." After identifying herself, my mother had no opportunity to utter a word. Mrs. Halpern was upset—we could tell by the loud, unending torrent of words that we could hear but not distinguish from afar. My father hovered as close to the telephone as he could and as soon as the conversation was over, he was at my mother's elbow asking, "Did he go? Did he go?"

"Yes," answered my mother, "he went to Portland in this awful storm. They wouldn't have had any Pesach things if he hadn't. Instead of getting a few boxes of matzah here, some chicken fat there, and taking advantage of every opportunity to bring in the things for Passover as we all did, Mrs. Halpern left everything over and depended on this trip of Jake's. So he *had* to go to Portland in this bitter weather. She is worrying terrible about his rheumatism."

My father was jubilant. "So I'll get my Passover brandy, after all. There is only a third left from last year's bottle, and it might not last through the eight days."

"All you think about is your brandy," my mother said acidly. "How a man can be so crazy for drink . . . ."

My father fled from her. My mother turned again to the telephone and gave Mrs. Klein's number to the operator. She did not even wait to exchange the customary salutations and inquiries of health, but began at once breathlessly, "Mrs. Klein, I called you right away to tell you how glad I am you didn't send the duck to Portland with Jake Halpern in this weather. The duck would have caught a cold, and you know how he suffered from the last one. You suffered, too—having to bring him warm cream of wheat to the cellar back and forth. Much, much better, you should wait with the duck. The right time will come, don't worry. And this Pesach, thank God, there is plenty to eat—more than anyone from the kosher houses ever had before on a Pesach."

SPRING was slow in coming that year. The ground was sodden with the leaden rains that seemed unending. The cold clung to the air though the pussy willows in the swamp burst their tight green buds to silken, silver furs and the mayflowers were pure, waxen pink beneath the discolored leaves of winter. Upon arising, my father would go to the window and survey the dull, gray, dripping universe. "Good weather for ducks," he would observe wryly before going about the business of the day.

"It's good for the farmers," my mother would reply philosophically. "Mrs. Klein's duck must be enjoying himself."

"Is she still feeding that duck?" my father exclaimed. "It must have cost her a fortune by now."

"To feed a duck doesn't cost much. A little milk and bread, a little grain, left-overs. But Mrs. Klein has other troubles," my mother reported sadly. "The duck goes outside and plays in the water and mud. Afterwards, he likes to come into the house. He got used to being on the sun porch. Mrs. Klein is having a hard time cleaning up after the duck."

"Is that a duck or is it a king?" my father snorted. "Who ever heard of a duck having the run of a civilized household? Such a foolishness and all over a duck."

"Mrs. Klein wants to make the duck happy during its lifetime," my mother explained apologetically. "The week after next, Mr. Klein is getting a ride to Bangor and he will take the duck to the shochet."

ONE DAY the skies did clear and the sun came out bright and strong. The days were warm and the earth deep brown and springy. The grass was lush and green and the spring flowers appeared almost overnight as if by magic. Mrs. Klein's front yard was a wild tangle of purple-blue and white iris flags struggling out from the profusion of thick green leaves. The black-and-yellow-throated flowers lifted their nodding blue and white heads above the massed foliage crowding one upon the other. Every afternoon, Mrs. Klein could be seen among the flowers, pruning fork and trowel in hand, making vain attempts to achieve order in that neglected overgrowth. The sun shown on her snow-white head as she paused beside the walk to explain to passers-by, sadly shaking her head, "I let it go for too long. I should have begun thinning out the iris five years ago instead of leaving it for now." At the other end of the capacious yard was the white duck, busily scratching away, roving between the flowers, the hammock, and

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the fruit trees at will. Whenever he came near Mrs. Klein she beamed at him. "That's my duck," she would announce to her casual visitors as she stooped to scratch his neck fondly. Mrs. Klein and her white duck among the iris became a familiar sight to the townspeople those first days of spring.

MRS. KLEIN did not work in her garden on Saturdays—no matter how tempting the weather and the warm brown earth. She still reserved Saturday afternoon for visiting us. And one of those Saturday afternoons, even before she entered the house, we could tell from her leaden, defeated walk as we glimpsed her approaching our porch that something was the matter. "I am in trouble—great trouble," she announced as she came in the door. "Trouble seems to dog my steps—everything I do."

"What is the matter, Mrs. Klein?" my mother and father asked together.

"The duck has gone," Mrs. Klein said momentously. "Since Thursday, the duck is gone. Laid an egg and went away."

"Maybe somebody took the duck. Maybe the duck is hiding somewhere or got lost?" my mother suggested.

"I have looked high and low since Thursday and asked all the neighbors," answered Mrs. Klein. "Everybody knows my duck, so who could take it? No, the duck laid an egg and then ran away from me. After I was so good to it."

"Maybe the duck went to Bangor to see the shochet," my father said.

My mother glared at him. "Maybe the duck will come back," she said. "Wait, Mrs. Klein."

"No," Mrs. Klein intoned dolefully, "the duck will never come back. And after the way I fed it and nursed it—you remember when it had a cold?"

"I remember," said my mother, shaking her head. "Too bad."

"It will never come back," Mrs. Klein repeated in a tone of conviction.

"So where are Mrs. Gross and Mrs. Halpern?" my father asked. "They're coming?"

"They're coming," said my mother.

## THE BLADE OF GRASS SINGS TO THE RIVER

### LEAH GOLDBERG

EVEN to the children
on the disenchanted shore,
to little ones like me,
one of the myriad poor,
the waters as they rove
murmur, murmur of love.

And when the sun caresses
the stream from time to time,
even I am seen,
where deep the water races,
imaged in the soundless green
where all things are profound.

Deeper grows my image
as seaward it is swirled,
darkens and disappears
on the threshold of forever.
One with the voice of the river,
the murmuring song of the river,
the silent soul declares
the glory of the world.

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LEAH GOLDBERG is one of that remarkable group of Israeli poets who have mastered Hebrew even though it is not their first language. This is a companion poem to the one by her that we printed last month. The translation from the Hebrew is, again, by Robert Friend.

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# CEDARS OF LEBANON

## FROM MOSES MONTEFIORE'S DIARY

### *Episodes in a Victorian Life*

No Jewish figure of the 19th century enjoyed so high a reputation among his own people as Sir Moses Montefiore. His many philanthropies, which continued throughout the whole of a fabulously long life (he died in 1885 in his hundred and first year), were only a part of the reason for this universal adulation. Certainly his preeminent position was not due to any unusual gifts of learning; his formal schooling had ended at the age of fourteen and, though very devout, he knew hardly more Hebrew than was required for the recitation of prayers. Nevertheless he was, by the common consent of such dissimilar communities as the English, Russian, and Moroccan Jewries, the representative Jew of his time.

The explanation of Montefiore's preeminence is to be found in his position as inheritor and most distinguished occupant of the "office" of *shtadlan*—the influential Jew who pleads his people's case in the courts of the mighty—which he performed on an international scale. In his unceasing labors in the Jewish cause at the courts of European and Near Eastern potentates he was always armed with the moral and official blessings of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's British government. Through him the humanitarian impulses and great international influence of Victorian England were turned to the defense of persecuted Jewish communities all over the world.

During most of his active career Montefiore kept an almost daily diary of his activities. In 1890, after his death, this was published by his faithful companion and adviser, Dr. Louis Loewe. Dr. Loewe for the most part summarizes the entries of the original, occasionally adding comment from his own notes or personal memories of the occasions on which he accompanied the author. The resulting text is therefore not very illuminating as a picture of Montefiore. But it does make a fascinating traveler's account of the Jewish communities of his time and affords an often bizarre view of the Christian and Mohammedan courts where he was generally received with great respect.

The first excerpt given below, dated 1840, is Montefiore's description of his audience with the Sultan of Turkey, which was the high point of his efforts to defend the Jews of Damascus and Rhodes against ritual murder libels. The second excerpt, dated 1846, is Dr. Loewe's description of part of the tour Montefiore made to Poland and Russia, on the invitation of the Russian government, to investigate the situation of the Jews of those countries.—Arthur Hertzberg

WEDNESDAY, October 28th [1840]—Sir David Wilkie, Mr. Pisani and George Samuel dined with us, and at seven afterwards we set out. Our cavalcade consisted of one carriage with four horses, and one with two horses, six kavasses or police officers, eight men carrying large wax torches, two horsemen with each coach, a sedan chair with each coach, and three men to close the procession. As the carriages could not drive up to our door I was carried in a sedan chair to the foot of the hill, the other gentlemen walked, and I was in the first carriage with Mr. Pisani, the British Dragoman; George Samuel, Mr. Wire, and Dr. Loewe in the second. I wore my full uniform. The streets were crowded; many of the Jews had illuminated their houses. We reached the Palace in rather less than an hour. On descending from the carriages we found in the courtyard a large guard of honour, who presented arms. We were shown into a handsome drawing room, furnished in European style. Two magnificent silver candlesticks with large wax candles stood on the ground in the cen-



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tre of a richly embroidered velvet carpet. We had not been seated two minutes when Rechid Pasha entered; he was most friendly in his manner. We were soon joined by Riza Pasha, and all were served with coffee and pipes, the mouthpieces and bowls of the latter being richly embellished with diamonds.

Rechid Pasha asked me how long I remained at Alexandria, how often I had seen Mohammad Ali, and how he looked? In a few moments it was announced that the Sultan was ready to receive us. The two Pashas walked first, I next, and the rest of our party followed, a large throng of officers bringing up the rear.

We crossed a garden about sixty yards in length, and entered a handsome marble hall; having descended a grand staircase, likewise of marble, we entered into the presence chamber.

The Sultan was seated on a sofa, clad in his cloak of state, which was fastened at the neck with two large clasps of the finest diamonds. The cloak itself was of a violet colour, similar in cut to our own. He was a good-looking young man, and appeared about twenty-six years of age, though in reality but nineteen. The two Pashas took their station on his left, I and my party on his right. After having received some courteous signs of welcome from him, I delivered the speech I had intended to have read to him, but instead of reading it, I spoke it, as I knew it well by heart, and there was not sufficient light to read it without spectacles. I said as follows:—

"May it please your imperial Majesty,—In the name of my brethren, who have deputed me, I come to lay at the foot of your Imperial Throne the grateful homage of their respect.

"England, my country, and other enlightened nations of the earth, heard the cries of the suffering and persecuted Jews at Damascus and at Rhodes, and they hastened to offer to the sufferers their sympathy and affection. But the Lord God, who ruleth over all, prevented the necessity of their aid at Rhodes, and inspired your Imperial Majesty with wisdom, justice, and the love of truth. Under your righteous direction the oppressor was laid low, the designs of the wicked made known, and the innocent delivered. I therefore crave permission to offer to your Imperial Majesty the profound gratitude of the hearts of our people, and to utter our prayers that the merciful God may bless your Imperial Majesty with length of days, with wisdom, honour, and riches, and so direct all your actions, that your name may be inscribed in golden characters for ever, and the memory of your deeds smell as sweet as a garden of roses.

"In ancient times the Lord God brought our people out of Egypt, and for ages they dwelt in Palestine; to them were committed the oracles of God, and though now dispersed among the nations of the earth, they are numbered with the most peaceful and loyal subjects, and by their industry they have augmented the riches and prosperity of the countries in which they live.

"They look with love and veneration upon that land where their forefathers dwelt; they pray that all who live therein may enjoy the shadow of your sublime protection, and in peace be permitted to worship the God of their fathers.

"Their prayers ascend to Him whose wisdom is absolute, whose decrees are fixed and immutable, whom none can withstand, imploring that He will make your enemies eat the dust, that they may vanish as the morning dew, and flee away as chaff before the wind; that your throne may endure for ever, and that all who live under your sceptre may have peace, sitting under their own vine and their own fig-tree, none daring or wishing to make them afraid."

The Sultan listened with great attention, and as soon as I had finished, Mr. Pisani repeated it in Turkish. The Sultan smiled whilst he was reading, and showed that he well understood the address and was pleased with it. As soon as Mr. Pisani had concluded, the Sultan fixed his eyes on me, and spoke in a mild and pleasing voice. "I am perfectly satisfied," he said, "with the communication made and the sentiments expressed by the deputation.

"I have been affected by the events which have taken place in Damascus, but I have endeavoured to offer some satisfaction to the Israelitish nation, by giving orders that justice should be done in the affair of Rhodes.

"The Israelitish nation shall always have, from me, the same protection and enjoy the same advantages as all other subjects of my Empire.

"I will grant the deputation the firman they have asked.

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"I know, gentlemen, how to appreciate the pure philanthropy which has led you to the capital."

HAVING given his reply, the Sultan requested me to come nearer. Rechid Pasha again presented me by name. The Sultan smiled most graciously, and said, "Present your friends to me." I first presented George Samuel, my relative, then Mr. Wire of the city of London, and Dr. Loewe. When Mr. Pisani repeated the last name and the Doctor made a bow, Mr. Pisani informed the Sultan that the Doctor had presented to the late Sultan a translation of the hieroglyphical inscription on the Obelisk in the Hippodrome. The Sultan spoke with Rechid Pasha to explain it, and then said he remembered seeing it, and seemed much pleased, and said the Doctor must be a learned man.

The Sultan could not have given us a more flattering reception; it was at the same time most dignified. The room in which he received us was well proportioned, and neatly furnished in European style. The curtains were of rich yellow satin and embroidered damask and velvet, most probably of French manufacture; the carpet was English; there were two large wax torches standing in elegantly carved candelabras. We descended a flight of marble stairs, and were shown into a large and handsome room, splendidly furnished, and more brilliantly illuminated than the other room.

We chatted with Rechid and Riza Pashas, expressed our thanks to them for their great kindness in procuring for us at so unusual a time an audience with His Imperial Majesty, and our gratitude to His Majesty for his gracious reception and reply. I asked Rechid Pasha when I might hope to receive the firman which the Sultan had promised me, as I was most desirous of returning to England the moment I got it. He replied that he supposed I should not go before the next steamer left (on the 7th of November), and that I should have it by that time; but as it was the Ramazan, there was some difficulty in preparing it. We returned in state as we came, the guard of honour saluting us as we passed them in the court of the palace. We were again served, after the audience, in the lower room of the palace with sherbet in elegant glasses, and we had splendidly embroidered table napkins. A military band played during the greater part of the time we were at the Palace. We found the streets still more crowded than when we went; not a window in the whole street through which we passed by but was filled with female faces. As we approached the Jewish street we experienced even more difficulty in passing. At the end of the same street Signor Commundo, with the ecclesiastical chief of Galata and about twenty of our acquaintances, insisted on walking with us to our house. I was delighted to see my dear Judith, and to acquaint her with our happy reception and the complete success of our Mission, for which we return our grateful thanks to Heaven.

* * *

FRIDAY, May 8th [1846]—The representatives of the Hebrew congregation of this town [Vilna], together with those of other Hebrew congregations from some of the principal towns in Russia, under the presidency of the Chief Rabbi, held a meeting for the purpose of examining the papers which had been prepared for presentation to Sir Moses, in reply to the charges brought against them at St. Petersburg. It was arranged to request Sir Moses to appoint the following day, in the evening, after the termination of the Sabbath, for their reception, and to invite the writer of these lines to address the congregation on the following morning in the principal Synagogue of the town, so as to afford to thousands of their brethren and visitors the opportunity of becoming acquainted with any suggestion which it might be deemed desirable to communicate to them relative to the Mission of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore.

With this view a deputation waited on Sir Moses, and he agreed to receive them at the appointed time. The same deputation also brought me the invitation to deliver an address in their Synagogue, which I willingly accepted.

Saturday, May 9th—Divine service was held in the apartments of Sir Moses early in the morning. In the afternoon, at about two o'clock, he and Lady Montefiore proceeded to the Synagogue, where I delivered the address in the presence of a very large assembly of members of various communities and visitors. In the evening all the representatives of Wilna, and those of the principal towns in Russia, together with the gentlemen who

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wrote the reports in the Hebrew, French and Russian languages, and others of high standing in the community, headed by their Ecclesiastical Chief, presented the papers which Sir Moses was so anxiously expecting.

It is often a grave and exciting moment for those present in a court of justice, when the accused, however humble his station in life may be, pleads his cause and vindicates his innocence against a vigorous prosecutor; graver, however, and considerably more exciting was the seance which I now witnessed, when not merely a private individual, but the representatives of three millions of loyal subjects of the Emperor of Russia, pleaded their cause and vindicated their innocence against the most serious charges brought against them and their religious tenets by the Ministers of the Empire. I repeatedly noticed tears rolling down the cheeks of the venerable elders of the community. Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore themselves could hardly suppress their emotion.

Every word contained in the written statements had been translated by me into English, and the whole was read aloud to the assembly. Sir Moses addressed questions to the representatives of the various communities, and elicited numerous replies; but the more voluminous ones had to be taken away with us, to be read next day by Sir Moses on the road.

Thus many hours of the night passed; it was two o'clock in the morning when the conference terminated. Refreshments were handed round. Sir Moses drank to "better times, and to the health and prosperity of his brethren in Russia." The Chief Rabbi, the representatives of the community, and all present shed tears at the contemplation of our departure.

Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore left many souvenirs to those who had so kindly attended them during their stay in Wilna, and sent hundreds of bottles of the best wine, and many kinds of meat, and cakes of every description to the hospitals. All the charitable institutions and all deserving cases were remembered by most generous gifts, and nothing more was left for him to do.

The favourable impression which the people of Wilna made on Sir Moses prompted him to say to those present, as he stepped into his carriage: "I leave you, but my heart will ever remain with you. When my brethren suffer, I feel it painfully; when they have reason to weep, my eyes shed tears."

AT FOUR o'clock in the morning, when no one in the town expected our departure, we left Wilna for Wilcomir. The recent rains had made the roads very bad; heavy sand and numerous ruts prevented our proceeding at the average rate of travelling. In one spot our conveyance stuck fast in a deep hole, and we were detained for fully half-an-hour. This unpleasant circumstance was much aggravated by the hundreds of poor Russian men, women, and children following the carriage for miles on the road. The more they had given to them, the more they appeared to want.

After a ride of seventy-six and a half versts we reached Wilcomir, where a deputation from the Hebrew community brought us wine and cake. The account which they gave of their brethren was but sorrowful. Of five hundred families, they said, one-fourth died last year from destitution.

We visited the school and charitable institutions, and next day continued our journey to Kowno.

Hundreds of persons, with lighted candles in their hands, greeted us on our arrival at Kowno. We found an elegant house prepared for us, all the rooms and passages brilliantly lighted with wax candles. The host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Kadisohn, attended on Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore themselves. "We have not had," Lady Montefiore said, "such beds or accommodation since leaving England."

Sir Moses had an important interview with the Governor of the town respecting the employment of Jews to repair the high roads, they being willing to work for twenty kopeks a day, while labourers of other denominations receive thirty. We here received information regarding the Jews, in general, living in that district; and the representatives of the community, headed by their Chief Rabbi, supplemented this by numerous statements made to Sir Moses in writing.

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# ON THE HORIZON

## A VISIT FROM ROYALTY

*The Fitful Fevers of a Loyal Populace*

DAN JACOBSON

I HAVE been reading an article—one of a series—by Miss Rebecca West on the Coronation. The article appeared in the *Rand Daily Mail* of Johannesburg, and in it I read about the London crowds who had gathered to look at the decorations and wait for the ceremony to take place. I read that the people came to Buckingham Palace because, ". . . in a world spoiled by war the Queen proves that not all is spoiled; there is still youth, still loveliness, still gaiety, still goodness. Since she is the emblem of our State, these people hope that now our national life will burst into flower with all these attributes." And I wondered if Miss West was being accurate; if crowds in England are so very much different from crowds in South Africa. Perhaps they are—if so, this article can be considered a kind of anthropological report on the behavior of white South Africans; if not, its interest may be more general, and it may serve as a corrective to the kind of report from England that fills the newspapers whenever the royal family makes a major excursion. One can take only so much of it: sooner or later one has to compare these reports with one's own memories of a royal occasion.

I HAVE seen royalty only once, in Johannesburg. The royal visit was the most ballyhooed event ever that I can remember in this country. The royal family was dinned into us from every newspaper, every cinema, every wireless broadcast, every shop window, every decoration hung across every street. The royal family was here; the royal family was there; the royal family did this; the royal family did that. They had been in South Africa for weeks before they arrived in Johannesburg, and by that time hysteria was inescapable. A female announcer of the South African Broadcasting Corporation burst into tears over the air when the royal family came round her corner; a reporter on one of the dailies claimed that he had been stopped by "an ordinary man in the street" in one of the Reef mining towns, who had exclaimed: "What a golden eagle among men is the King!" The reader can imagine the rest of what went on; or can always look up a newspaper describing the Coronation.

And at last, one rather cloudy day, the royal family came to beflagged, ecstatic Johannesburg. I saw them in the morning, whizzing up Eloff Street in an open car, with outriders on motorcycles, and a ripple of applause coming from the people, fading before it had begun because the car was gone so quickly. It was followed by a succession of big American cars with nameless people in them, nothing to cheer, and all moving at a breathtaking pace. The police-

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LAST year's coronation of the British Queen called forth astonishing "royalist" effusions and demonstrations not only in Britain but in very republican America. No jarring note was allowed to intrude into the public chorus of reverence and piety. Had the spirit of irreverence and dissent, one wondered, completely departed? Perhaps not, to judge by DAN JACOBSON's recollections of a visit of the late George VI and the royal family to South Africa. Mr. Jacobson is a young South African writer who has contributed a number of short stories to COMMENTARY, the most recent of which, "A Family Man," appeared in our December issue.



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men relaxed, an officer took his hand away from his cap, and the people turned to one another with reluctant, drawn faces, like sleepers awakened from a dream. As though waking, the crowd began to move, people began picking up their folding chairs, and children ran across the street where the cars had passed, and the policemen let them. The two rows of people on either side of the street broke up, wavered, walked towards the station or the tram termini, carrying the little flags they had hardly had time to wave. Now they were talking to one another, and it was all over, and the street was moving. It had been so queer. I do not know what the people had been expecting, for I had not been among them before the convoy of cars had come past, and had, indeed, been taken by surprise by the tired, known faces rushing past, and the quick too-late ripple, succeeded for a moment by languor, and then the waking. The people dispersed with no exaltation or disappointment: they were strange to see at that moment, as though one were in a thousand bedrooms as day returned and the sleepers reluctantly and inevitably admitted the light between their lids.

In the evening the emotions were different, and I was among them, for I was sitting on one of the stands that had been erected along Commissioner Street. There were thousands of people, and this time, with night, with darkness, with the thousands of colored lights, the people were awake and wild. All over Johannesburg there were huge throngs of people, walking, yelling; the bars were full and noisy, and as one does so often in Johannesburg, one caught the feel of violence in the dark streets with their dark buildings towering tall on either side. The liveliness of the streets that are usually deserted except for cars after nightfall had something terrifying about it: the city was awake and alive, bristling like an animal. And the passion that filled the people, that kept them awake and in the streets, that drove them to walk up and down and in and out of bars and on to the stands, and wait on street corners, was elemental and powerful. It was curiosity.

I have never known anything like it. There was a huge animal passion of curiosity among the people, that was like a hunger, and was later to become a rage. They walked and waited and talked, with their souls quivering open as though something would be shown to them that night without which they could not live. It seemed to be some final, lasting knowledge that they were seeking; something that would satisfy them forever. And all the night was tedious and tense, until the knowledge would be given to them. Now they had to wait among these buildings, and then they would *see*.

We waited. The policemen forbade people to cross Commissioner Street, and we waited. We settled down and waited, and then became restive again. Someone threw some orange peel at a policeman, and he grew angry and drew his baton. He said he would kill the person who did it. But the crowd told him to be quiet. They called him Major, and Colonel, and even, in a flight of fancy, Field-Marshal Smuts. And the young constable put his baton away and muttered to himself. Then a new sport began. People started slipping across the road, and the policemen would try to stop them. Somebody would wait until all the policemen on a particular stretch of road were busy chasing someone else, and then he would dash across, a small hurrying figure running across the dark tar, with the policemen after him. If he did manage to get across, a cheer went up from the crowd; if he didn't, a groan of commiseration. People called to the police, distracting their attention to help others get across. It was all quite good-humored, but eventually one of the policemen hit one of the people he caught, and the game stopped in anger.

But we soon forgot the man led away with blood coming from his forehead. We were waiting for the two princesses to go to a ball, and now there were young couples walking past us, the men wearing evening suits and the girls in long dresses. So we cheered them, but mockingly, for white South Africans are democrats among themselves, and do not readily admit anyone else's right to be cheered just like that, unless he is a politician or a rugby player. The people we cheered were not flattered, and also, being white South Africans too, most of them were extremely embarrassed, not being used to that sort of thing, being unable to accept it. When we saw that, we cheered louder of course; and made rude remarks

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about the girls, and commented on the thinness of their dresses. "*Sis!*" a woman next to me exclaimed, using our national emphatic expression of disgust. "These people have got no respect." She must have been one of nature's Englishwomen, for the rest of us had no respect at all, and no shame at not having any.

But all this, we knew, was preparatory, and everyone was relieved when at last the street was cleared and the policemen came to attention. "When they coming, General Smuts?" someone asked the policeman nearest to us. He said: "Two minutes time," and now we settled down in silence. We hunched, waiting for their coming. Hardly anyone spoke, and we waited in the dark street. Then—a bright glow of car headlights, and a shout from the people farther down the road, the shout coming nearer, not yet really loud, and then it was upon us—a glimpse, a vision of pale glittering faces in a black car that was past us, again, before we could really shout, before we could really do anything. And now it was gone. There was nothing now, except for empty Commissioner Street, the receding tail light of a motor car.

Nothing had been given us. As in the morning, there was a momentary silence, a kind of numbness. Then the animal awoke—not begrudgingly, as in the morning, but with a full throat. A roar went up from the crowd, a huge animal yell that rang in the streets. All along the road people were shouting, no words, no statement, just a cheated roar. No answer had been given to them. And the yell died into silence as suddenly as it started.

AT THIS point my brother and I started a stampede. I don't know why we did it, to this very day, but it was something that I would probably do again if I were to get a chance. Perhaps we were all a little bit mad that night, and I do think the stampede would have started anyway: all we did was make it wilder and more noisy than it otherwise might have been. My brother slid off the stand and gave a frantic scream, and began running down the road, past the Kensington tram terminus and towards the City Hall. I did the same. We both screamed and ran, but for a few paces only. We stopped, unable to go on. We were laughing too much to go on running. For now the whole mob was doing what we had been doing: they were running past us towards the City Hall, all screaming at the tops of their voices, and running as though life depended on what they were doing. They screamed and ran, coming from both sides of Commissioner Street. The police were unable to stop them. Jackets and dresses were flying loose, hundreds of feet were beating on the pavement, hundreds of voices were screaming at the night, at nothing. A woman fell, and nobody stopped to pick her up. They jumped over her, or side-stepped to get away from what was just an obstruction in their path and not a crying woman on the pavement. In guilt, we helped to pick her up, and no sooner was she on her feet than she jerked away from us and ran, screaming like all the others.

The princesses apparently had entered the City Hall through the door facing the Cenotaph, for our mob ran straight into another huge crowd gathered there. In the blaze of floodlights, the mobs of people were pushing and screaming and waving their hands. There was nothing to wave at, for the princesses had already gone inside. Policemen with linked arms were pushing the people away from the doors. The people were possessed; in a rage, a frenzy, their passion unabated. Something had to be given to them—glimpses of two shining girls could not slake this thirst. So their passion focused itself on the nearest thing to hand, though that was a neutral enough thing: the car the princesses had arrived in. The car became their target. To see the car, to touch, to hold it, to clasp it, to destroy it perhaps. But no, they did not want to destroy it. The pain of their longing was almost unbearable, to judge by their eagerness to do what was in itself insignificant. They had to touch the car. They pushed and fought with one another, driving forward in surges towards the car. A woman next to me was carrying a baby in her arms, but she too was pushing, and the child's face was smothered in her sleeve. She screamed at me in Afrikaans, "*Eina!* You are pushing like a kaffir!" and for one moment I remembered reading in one of the papers about the almost miraculous spirit of good will between the races that had been spread throughout the country by the royal visit. Miraculous, apparently, was the word.

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But that was lost, the woman, her words, the baby, as the crowd again gave a heave and we were all carried forward, this time right against the backs of the policemen who, with linked arms, were shoving us away from the car as determinedly as we were shoving towards it. The night was pandemonium, bedlam, and all in a blaze of light that made every white face shine as though transfigured, paradisal, except for the expressions the faces wore, the twisted mouths, the open mouths, the eyes lit by passion, the muscles drawn tight across cheekbones, the lifting lips, illumined. The people abandoned themselves to a passion I can no longer name. The car was there: they saw it, they drove towards it, some of them touched it; and still the passion was unfulfilled, their faces unrelaxed. And the police shoved them back, shoved them back, until a passage was cleared and the car drove away, though a thousand voices called after it in a gasp, like this, "Ah!" and again, as the car turned a corner, "Ah!" from the back of a thousand throats.

I HAD had enough by this time, and after some searching and pushing I managed to get hold of my brother. We linked arms and made our way through the bodies and feet and hands and handbags, and finally got out of the pressure of the crowd, to the side of the City Hall. Few people seemed to be leaving: most of the crowd was still heaving about immediately around where the princesses' car had been. God knows what they were looking for now, on what new point they hoped to focus their passion.

The last thing I remember that evening before leaving the crowd was a small, English-speaking South African, in a neat brown suit and shirtcuffs neat at his wrists, speaking to himself, or possibly to others, in hope of whipping them into action that he himself was afraid to take. He was pointing at a group of Indian youths on the outskirts of the crowd, and his face bore that pale, fanatical look, self-absorbed, as though listening to God within himself, that white South Africans often wear when they are planning violence on those with darker skins than their own. "Look at them," he was saying. "Look at them. Filthy —— coolies, coming to look at the King and Queen, as if they were white men. Look at them —— cheeky coolies. Let's do something." His voice broke. "For God's sake, let's do something." Now his mouth was trembling. I knew the trembling would soon spread to his hands, his body. He stared at the Indians: he also was committing himself to a passion, perhaps a related one to that which still sent the crowds in surges across the road, the crowds that, as the next morning's papers put it, had gathered to show their love to the princesses.

THE only footnote I can add is that some months later the university which I was attending at that time held a Rag through the streets of the city. One of the floats was an act of *lèse-majesté* so blatant that I could scarcely believe my eyes. The float showed four people on a motor car, two of them riding on the luggage carrier at the back, and all of them grotesquely made up, all of them ogling the crowd, blowing kisses and waving bottles, and all of them completely and disgustingly drunk, including the two repulsive male students on the back dressed up as girls. It was by far the most successful float in the procession, and it was greeted with gales of laughter by the same crowds that had gathered in the streets at the time of the royal visit. The people laughed and pointed, and gave yell after yell of applause. I have heard that sort of spontaneous good-humored jeer go up from a group of people in one other place, and that was in a cinema in Rehovoth, Israel, where an audience composed mostly of refugees from the Christian world greeted with a clamor of catcalls and laughter a particularly syrupy Hollywood shot of a soldier crossing himself. Obviously, the Israelis were getting some of their own back.

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# THE STUDY OF MAN

## PAGAN IDEAS AND THE JEWISH MIND

### *Japhet in the Tents of Shem*

THEODOR H. GASTER

ALMOST everybody knows by now that Christmas and Easter and many of the saints' days of the Church go back to earlier heathen festivals, and that several of the saints themselves are but Christian transformations of pagan gods and heroes. Often, indeed, the latter still appear on the Christian stage without appreciable change of outward trappings, as when Cosmas and Damian still ride the white horses of the Heavenly Twins and are surmounted by the morning and evening stars.

To what extent the same process has taken place in Judaism is, however, far less well known; for although it has been the subject of considerable study, the conclusions at which scholars have arrived have not yet percolated to the popular level. Consequently, the average Jew still adheres to a somewhat one-sided conception of how his faith really evolved.

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THE deeper scholars dig into the Jewish past, and the less they find in it that is exclusively Jewish in detail, the more unique becomes the *synthesis* of those details that is known as Judaism. THEODOR H. GASTER'S survey of some of the most important and recent of such delvings—into the Judaism of Graeco-Roman times—results in further confirmation of this fact. A steady contributor to COMMENTARY, Dr. Gaster is professor of Comparative Literature at Dropsie College in Philadelphia and lecturer in Semitic Civilizations at New York University. He was born in London in 1906 and attended the University of London and Columbia University. His last full-length contribution to these pages was in March 1953 with "Yizkor: the Living and the Dead."

THE story begins in the Bible itself, for scholars have had little difficulty in showing that many of the legends recounted in the earlier chapters of Genesis, or incidentally referred to by the prophets and poets, really hark back to the pagan lore current in Palestine and the neighboring countries even before the advent of Israel. The story of the Flood, for example, is related in substantially the same form in the far earlier Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh and was probably designed originally to account for the annual flooding of the Euphrates valley. In that version, too, we have the sparing of the righteous man, the construction of the ark, the dispatch of the birds, and the eventual sacrifice of thanksgiving. Similarly, the legend of the Tower of Babel, "with its top in heaven," very probably originated in a popular tale designed to account for the great stepped temple (*ziggurat*) of Babylon; while when the Psalmist speaks (Ps. 74: 13-14) of Jehovah's primeval combat with Leviathan, or when Job exclaims (7:12), "Am I sea or dragon, that Thou shouldst set watch over me?" they are alluding to a Canaanite myth which has been rediscovered, during the past twenty-five years, on clay tablets unearthed in North Syria. Indeed, Isaiah's description of that monster (27:1) as "the slant serpent . . . the tortuous serpent," reproduces the very words of the more ancient pagan text!

Again, the familiar tale of the temptation of Joseph by Potiphar's wife has its earlier counterpart in an Egyptian story told in a papyrus of the 13th century B.C.E.; while an entire section of the Book of Proverbs has been traced to the Egyptian maxims of Amen-em-ope.

Even the Psalms—so distinctive an expression of the Israelite genius—draw heavily on



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earlier models. It has been pointed out, for example, that Psalm 93, with its reference to Jehovah's becoming king, dominating the seas and rivers, dispensing his sure decrees and occupying his palace of beauty, is in all likelihood a mere reworking or adaptation of a Canaanite hymn based on a recently recovered myth which relates how the god Baal attained sovereignty and was installed in a sumptuous palace by virtue of the fact that he engaged and vanquished the truculent Lord of the Sea and Streams. So, too, when "the sons of the mighty" are bidden, in Psalm 29, to "ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength," it is not difficult to recognize the same process, for the fact is that the Hebrew words translated as "sons of the mighty" really mean "lesser gods," and this is the standard expression used in Canaanite texts to refer to the minor members of the pantheon.

Sometimes, to be sure, the indebtedness of the Hebrews to their neighbors is apparent only in an implicit allusion, a mere turn of speech embodying a tidbit of traditional mythology. A case in point is the prophet Habakkuk's statement (3:5) that when Jehovah goes on the warpath, "Pestilence stalketh before Him, and plague goeth forth at His feet"; for the word rendered "plague" is really the name of the Canaanite plague-god, Resheph, and the allusion is to the ancient belief that when gods walked abroad they were flanked by two celestial attendants. In the Babylonian story of the Flood, for example, it is said expressly that when the storm-god appeared on the horizon, he was escorted by two servitors, and in the Iliad we read similarly that Apollo and Ares were accompanied by the two demons Fear and Terror.

An even more striking illustration is afforded by the familiar passage in the Book of Genesis (3:24) which states that after the expulsion of Adam and Eve, cherubim were posted eastward of Eden "to keep the way to the tree of life." Throughout the centuries, these cherubim have been portrayed as night-gowned angels—a conception which is, in fact, utterly foreign to the ancient Semitic mind. In reality, as we now know from Mesopotamian sources, they were simply griffins, like those which the Babylonians and Assyrians placed at the doors of their houses, so that what confronts us is but another relic of primitive myth, analogous to the widespread motif of the dragon guarding the pot of gold.

Nor is it only in the field of literature that such indebtedness obtains. Scholars have shown also that the seasonal festivals of Israel were patterned largely upon earlier pagan institutions. Take, for example, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Although this was given a historical *raison d'être* as the memorial of a crucial incident in Israel's past, the existence of similar practices elsewhere strongly suggests that the ban on fermented food was originally nothing more than a precautionary measure designed to insure that the communal meal eaten ceremonially by kinsmen at the season of harvest should leave no untoward effects; while the signing of the lintel with blood is paralleled in many parts of the world and was therefore scarcely an innovation; nor was it, in fact, conditioned by the particular circumstances by which it is validated in the Scriptural narrative.

In the same way, too, the popular celebration of Purim, with its burning of Haman in effigy, its election of a "Purim rabbi," and its burlesque mummeries, has undoubtedly drawn largely on the contemporaneous Carnival and Shrovetide ceremonies of the Christian year—themselves, in turn, derived from pagan prototypes. There, too, it is customary to burn the spirit of the past year, or the noxious and malevolent demons, to appoint a temporary "bishop of fools," and to stage guisings and miracle plays.

The debt extends also to many of the customs and superstitions connected with the life of the Jew at home. An excellent example is the so-called *Kimpezettel* (i.e. *Kindbett-zettel*), a written charm hung in the room of a woman in labor, or of one who has just given birth, in order to forfend Lilith, the child-stealing witch. A common element of the charm is the text of a story relating how that fell beldam once encountered the prophet Elijah and was persuaded to reveal to him all her secret names, thereby surrendering herself automatically into the power of anyone to whom he might transmit them. These names are duly set forth in the traditional amulet, and the interesting thing is that they are simply a hodge-podge of the different styles by which the child-stealing witch has been known in different parts of the world. One of them, for instance, is Striga, in which we may recognize at once the vampiric *strix*, or screech owl, of Roman folklore, the dread Strygoi of the Balkans, and the Italian *strega*, or "witch." Another is Gello

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or Gylo (perhaps originally a distortion of the Arabic *ghoul*, meaning "vampire"), and this links up with an ancient Greek belief, mentioned already by Sappho, to the effect that the spirit of a young woman named Gello, who died childless, pursued infants and carried them off.

Moreover, the child-stealing witch herself appears at a very early date in both Mesopotamian and Hittite magic, while a charm against Lilith "who flies into darkened chambers" has been found inscribed in Canaanite characters of the 7th century B.C.E. on a small limestone plaque discovered, some twenty years ago, at Arslan Tash on the Upper Euphrates. That plaque, it may be added, is furnished with a hole for hanging it on the wall, and it bears weird drawings in one of which the demon is portrayed as a wolf from whose jaws the legs of a child protrude. This last detail is particularly interesting in view of the fact that classical Greek writers frequently allude to the "Bogeywolf" (*Mormolukeion*) who comes to frighten naughty children; while a French work of the 17th century includes among the accomplishments of a magician that of teaching witches "to take the form of wolves and eat children."

THE devices by which the "pagan" material was "made kosher" are often as piquant as they are ingenious. The parade example is, of course, the way in which the letters N G H S on the four sides of the Chanukah *trendl* were converted from their original meaning of *Nichts* (nothing), *Ganz* (all), *Halb* (half) and *Stell* (put) in a game of chance to the initials of the Hebrew motto, *Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*, "a great miracle occurred there" —referring to the victory of the Maccabees and to the legend that, when the Temple was rededicated, oil which was really sufficient only for one day miraculously lasted for eight. But this by no means stands alone. Hermes, the inventor of the lyre, was transmogrified into the angel Hermesiel, leader of the heavenly choir, and this celestial being was in turn identified with David, "the sweet singer of Israel," who was believed to be still playing his harp before the throne of God. The vine of Bacchus, a common theme of pagan art, became the vine of Israel which God transplanted from Egypt and which "sent out her branches unto the sea, and her shoots unto the river" (see Psalm 80: 9-14). Similarly, too, because the pagans had a traditional book of magic named, for one of their ancient magicians, *The Sword of Dardanos*, a Hebrew work of the same character had perforce to be called *The Sword of Moses*.

Nowhere, perhaps, is the absorption of foreign elements by Judaism more strikingly brought out than in the decorations of synagogues, tombstones, and catacombs during the Graeco-Roman age. Discoveries made during the past twenty-five years have revealed that these very commonly include representations of pagan gods and goddesses and of figures and scenes drawn from pagan mythology. In the ancient synagogue at Chorazin, for example, there are pictures of centaurs and of the mace of Heracles; at Sheikh Abreiq, there is an Amazon and two Psyches; at Capernaum there is a frieze depicting six Cupids; at Jaffa, there is a typically Dionysiac design of a vine and a tiger; while elsewhere there are representations of Helios, the sun-god, of Leda, the mother of Apollo and Artemis, and (on an amulet) of Hecate.

The usual explanation of these designs is that they represent no more than artistic conventions which the Jews adopted mechanically but which had as little significance for their real religious faith as has (say) the rabbit's foot which might dangle today from the radiator of a Jew's automobile. This explanation, however, merely sidesteps the problem. For what is really at issue is not the significance of this or that particular borrowing, but rather of the underlying influence which led to such borrowing in general.

An alternative view attributes the designs, roundly and loosely, to a "syncretism" of Jewish and pagan cultures at the period in question. This, too, scarcely carries us much further. For syncretism implies a genuine and organic "growing together," whereas the very point that has here to be decided is whether what confronts us is a real "growing together" or merely a superficial juxtaposition.

RECENTLY, a new and revolutionary approach to the whole problem has been propounded by Professor Erwin R. Goodenough, of Yale.* According to Professor Goodenough, instead of starting with the assumption that the designs and symbols are necessarily "un-

*In *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Pantheon Press), 3 vols., $25.00.

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Jewish," we ought rather to revise our notions of what Judaism actually was in the Graeco-Roman age. The trouble is, he says, that we have been looking at it too narrowly, through exclusively Talmudic or rabbinic eyes, whereas in point of fact the broad masses of Jews tended at the time to view their ancestral heritage in a somewhat different perspective. The essence of their attitude was that they tried to find a Jewish meaning in the pagan symbols around them, and at the same time to invest traditional Jewish symbols with ideas picked up "from the outside." To be sure, the process operated at different levels, for not all elements of a population are endowed with the same type of mentality or the same degree of intellect. On the one hand, it was a matter of rarefied speculation and found expression in the philosophy of a Philo; on the other, it was one of mere osmosis, and was reflected in synagogal and funerary art and in popular amulets and magical spells.

When, for instance, a Jew engraved on a talisman the portrait of a heathen god and then labeled it "Iao" (i.e. Jehovah), he was not just combining two disparate things in a mechanical and meaningless fashion: he was expressing—or perhaps only dimly reflecting—the notion that some at least of the qualities that the pagans associated with the former might indeed be seen also in the latter. Conversely, when he depicted the seven-branched candlestick on the walls of synagogues or catacombs, he was reading into the time-honored Jewish symbol ideas about the transcendent light of God or the "illumination" of the dead which he had absorbed from the general thought of the day and which can be illustrated, on a less popular level, in the writings of the philosophers and theologians.

Some of Goodenough's examples are at least arresting. He points out, for instance, that only in the Greek period did Jews begin to inscribe on tombstones the familiar legend, "Peace" (*shalom*), or such analogous mottoes as "May he enter into peace, rest upon his bed." The phrases themselves were taken from the Bible (see Isaiah 57:2); what they now expressed, however, says Professor Goodenough, was not only a hope for repose in the grave but also—as Philo indeed interpreted them—for that perfect life of the soul, that "rest in God," which was made possible by its release from the things of the senses. Similarly, when cups and goblets found in tombs bear the legend, "Drink and live," they are not to be regarded as mere household glassware buried with the dead, nor is the inscription simply the equivalent of the modern *Le-chayim;* they symbolized the imbibing of eternal life. Or again, when magical spells invoked "the powers of God," they were employing a traditional Jewish expression with a special nuance, for what the writers had in mind was a contemporary "mystic" idea that God revealed himself, or operated, by a gradation of powers. Even such familiar symbols as the palm branch (*lulab*) and the ram's horn (*shofar*) were endowed with new significance, for now they served also as tokens of the resurrection.

At first blush, it might seem that this thesis is simply another excursion into a remote period of the past, and that the problem discussed is merely an academic conundrum or a headache for professional historians. Actually, however, it is far more than that; for although it may be open to challenge on several counts, it nevertheless performs a distinct service by its insistence that, in practice, Judaism was always broader than its rabbinic formulation, and that religion itself is always something different on the popular and emotional level from what it is on the rarefied and intellectual.

The main general objection to the theory lies, it would seem, in the difficulty of believing that ideas which were so much in the air as to find their way even into the decoration of synagogues should not also have invaded its ritual. Why is it, for example, that we do not find such ideas in the burial service itself, though we find them in the tombs of the departed? Why did the Jews never adopt in their worship—albeit with a "mystic" interpretation—the fawn skins and *thyrsoi* of Dionysus? And why did the mysteries of Attis, which were fashionable enough in Roman society, leave no impress on the Jewish liturgy?

Another general objection is that the "mystic" meanings which Professor Goodenough would read into the pagan designs and symbols are, in fact, derived mostly from the highly speculative philosophy of Philo, and there is no real evidence that such rarefied ideas were indeed entertained on a popular level. After all, the tombstone fashions of a country cemetery are hardly to be explained from the pages of Whitehead! Besides, even on this basis, a little too much still remains obscure. How, for ex-

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ample, are we to account for representations of Ganymede or of the undraped Aphrodite?

Coming down to cases, one is often left wondering whether some at least of the symbols and designs might not be interpreted more plausibly from the idiom of "normative" Judaism itself. Take, for instance, the very common combination of seven-branched candlestick, palm branch, and ram's horn. Is it really necessary to suppose that these familiar objects held a mystic or esoteric significance? The candlestick, we know, was often taken to symbolize the six days of Creation plus the Sabbath; the palm branch is the emblem of the Feast of Booths (Succoth); and the ram's horn immediately suggests New Year and the Day of Atonement. Accordingly, the combination would represent simply the familiar threefold division of the Jewish Holy Days into Sabbath, seasonal festivals, and solemn days, and thus symbolize the totality of Jewish festal observance. Moreover, the reason why these three objects were chosen, rather than (say) the *kiddush* cup, *matzah*, or the like, would have been that they were objects actually employed in the service of the synagogue.

Take, again, the use of candles and lights in tombs. It is difficult to see any real reason for interpreting them by reference to ideas about the Divine Light, such as are indeed to be found in the works of intellectual writers; nor need one impose upon this early usage the later interpretation of it as signifying that "the soul of a man is a lamp of the Lord" (Proverbs 20:27). The primary idea may have been simply that of lighting the dead through the darkness of the nether world. In the burial service of the Samaritans, for example, there occurs—with a fine homiletic twist—a very similar notion; for men are admonished that "the way is long; ere thou set foot on it, let a lamp of pure conduct be lit, that it may light up the darkness thereof."

Similarly, it seems unnecessary to read into *shalom* a wish for the soul's participation in the "peace of God." The word may be used simply in the sense of "goodbye," corresponding to the Roman *vale,* and—like its Roman counterpart—it may even possess a reciprocal sense, the living taking leave of the dead, and vice versa.

Then, too, there is the case of the "throne of Moses" mentioned both in the New Testament (Matthew 33:2) and in rabbinic literature as a feature of ancient synagogues. It has been commonly assumed that this was really a seat for the chief dignitary, and on this assumption Goodenough suggests that it may have been a transmogrification of the throne set for the deity in a pagan temple. Five years ago, however, Cecil Roth made the interesting and at least equally plausible suggestion that the "throne of Moses" was really a special chair on which the Scroll of the Law was placed at that stage of the service when it had already been read and was awaiting return to its receptacle; and he pointed out that such chairs actually exist—or existed—in the ancient synagogues of Rome, Carpentras, and—of all places—Kai-Feng-Fu.

Finally may be cited the case of the little hollows which are often to be found on flat Jewish tombstones in the Near East. Professor Goodenough explains them—albeit tentatively—from the current custom of Jews on the island of Djerba to fill such hollows with water in order therewith to wash the tombs of any deceased person whose intervention they would invoke at a moment of crisis. This, he thinks, goes back ultimately to the common pagan usage of *refrigerium,* or periodic "refreshment" of the departed. Here, again, an alternative explanation seems possible. It is commonly believed in modern Palestine that the dead come in search of water on Friday night. May not the little hollows have been designed simply to supply such a need? In support of this suggestion is the fact that the *thirst* of the dead is proverbial in many civilizations. It is mentioned already in the Bible (Isaiah 5: 13-14), while even earlier Babylonian texts speak of the nether world as "the field of thirst." The idea is likewise attested in early Arabic lore, while in the Greek Orphic Tablets the dead are represented as complaining of unslaked thirst.

IT HAS been said already that Goodenough's theory does not apply only to synagogal and funerary art; it is intended also to account for the bizarre admixture of Jewish and pagan elements that we find in contemporary magical inscriptions and talismans. On one gem, for instance, Artemis and Aesculapius are portrayed alongside the inscription "Iao" (Jehovah); while a Greek incantation to Eros, god of love, invokes also *Adonai Sabaoth,* "The Lord of Hosts," and it is very common for Hebrew tags and quotations from the Bible to be cited as "words of power."

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The question is, however, whether this in fact bears witness to a popular, syncretistic Judaism, as Goodenough supposes. It may be suggested alternatively that what it really evidences is simply the internationalism (or supranationalism) of magic. The essence of this type of magic, it may be submitted, is that when a man resorts to it he steps *ipso facto* outside the bounds of his own faith just because he deems its resources inadequate to his situation. He is in a state of hysteria and panic, and his intention is to "try everything" in the hope of restraining the essentially universal forces with which he finds himself unexpectedly confronted. Accordingly, he invokes against them indiscriminately Zeus, Thoth, and Jehovah, and whatever other gods and powers he can think of. Moreover, in bewildering uncertainty as to which, if any, human tongue they really understand, he takes no chances and addresses them in all that he can muster, prepared even to supplement the vocabulary of normal speech by inventing special magical words. It was for this reason, for example, that the magicians of Egypt and Greece attached importance to the use of the exotic Cretan language, and it was under the same impulse that Doctor Faustus attempted to conjure the princes of darkness by reeling off the names of the Hebrew tonic accents. It would seem, therefore, to be a radical misunderstanding of this type of magic to see in a hodge-podge born of desperation any real fusion or synthesis of faiths; on the contrary, what the hodge-podge actually reveals is the pitiful shifts of man when all faiths fail.

We come back, then, to the basic question: can the symbols and designs which we have been discussing be described as Jewish?

This, it may be suggested, is not really a substantive problem at all; it is a dilemma created only by verbal ambiguity—by the fact, that is, that the terms Judaism and Jewish happen to be used in modern parlance with two different frames of reference. They are taken, on the one hand, to denote roundly anything and everything characteristic of the life of Jews *en masse;* and on the other, only those objects, ideas, and institutions that express or reflect a specific religious commitment. And the confusion is compounded by the fact that neither definition is really sound. For, in the first case, the term is too broad, since it has logically to include many things that are by no means distinctive but common also to other cultures; while in the second, it is too narrow, since in traditional Jewish teaching there is in fact no separate category of religion, the Covenantal commitment of the Jew consisting not only in the acceptance of a prescribed code and discipline but equally in the continuous development and interpretation of it through daily life, experience, and insight. Besides, even if—for purely schematic purposes—we were to ignore this ideological objection and to define Judaism in terms of doctrines and rituals, we should still be up against the practical difficulty of determining whether the criterion should be origin or currency. How, for example, should we then classify the Shield (Star) of David, when worn as a brooch by a Gentile girl? Or how, conversely, should we classify Christian clerical garb when it is affected, as in England and France, by rabbis and Jewish "ministers of religion"?

Clearly, the problem goes much deeper than has been suspected. For what is actually involved is not whether this or that symbol held religious significance for Jews at this or that period, but the criterion by which Judaism itself is to be defined. And that, as the more discerning ancient sages would have said, is a problem for Elijah.

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# LETTERS FROM READERS

## Jewish Parochial Education

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have just put down your magazine after having read Mr. Harold Ribalow's article "My Child Goes to Jewish Parochial School" (January 1954).

To say the least, it was quite shocking.

It is understandable that as a reaction to the Jewish catastrophe in Europe there should be an upsurge in Jewish identification among present-day American Jews. Also that there should be a search by them for ways of reaffirming their Jewishness, particularly in the matter of the education of their children. I am sure there has been an increase in enrollment in Sunday schools, *folkshuls,* Talmud Torahs, etc., as each section of the Jewish population tries to find the particular educational institution which will meet its particular needs and requirements.

However, in his article Mr. Ribalow has confirmed the fears and misgivings voiced by the critics of parochial education.

The fact that a child's education takes place apart from other nationalities in the American community has always been one which I have felt increases his snobbishness, makes for arrogance, and creates a lack of genuine understanding of the differences among people. Does one, in order to be a good Jew, have to feel that his religion is the only true one and that there are no bad Jews (as Mr. Ribalow's daughter stated)? Is Mr. Ribalow's child more secure as a Jewish child if she can flaunt her "Jewishness" before her non-Jewish friends? Those of us who had experience, as children, of the pain which came to us because our Gentile friends flaunted their "Christmas" at us question the psychological rightness of this attitude on the part of Mr. Ribalow's child.

Yes, perhaps we should view the growth of the parochial school with alarm. There is everything good in the affirmation of one's cultural and religious self. But there is a good deal that is upsetting in this trend in education which fosters a spirit of exclusiveness, snobbishness, and childish arrogance.

Ruth W. Kaplan

New York City

## Judaism vs. Christianity

To the Editor of Commentary:

Contrary to Mr. Taubes's analysis of "The Issue Between Judaism and Christianity" (December 1953), it seems to me that Judaism and Christianity are alike with regard to "ways of life"; random prophetic visions and metaphysical speculations; a *corpus mysticum* which is "a way to achieve sacramental union with the divine," and which "reflects the divine and cosmic order in the human realm"; and antinomian characteristics—Isaiah and Koheleth match Jesus and Paul.

Judaism and Christianity part company in their conceptions of the deity.

The basic characteristic of Jewish religious thought is its unique concept of abstract Godliness.

The human psyche, constantly teetering on this lofty perch, sometimes falls into the mentally-more-comfortable slough of paganism with its golden calves, incarnate Messiahs, Sephirot, Golems, ghosts, and spirits—and Christianity, Sabbatianism, Cabalism, etc., result.

All these are divergences from the fundamental Jewish idea of an abstract Godhead—which, by the way, is far too "rich and various" to be enclosed by a rigid Halachah.

J. B. Jerome

Saranac Lake, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his "The Issue Between Judaism and Christianity" Jacob Taubes states that Rosenzweig introduced a new "theological" notion into Jewish thought by interpreting the coming of Jesus as having a Messianic significance for the Gentile nations, but not for the Jewish people.

Yet in the letter to his converted cousin, Hans Ehrenberg, May 11, 1918 (*Briefe,* 1935, p. 318) Rosenzweig says that he could cite many passages stating this idea, adding: "in [Hermann] Cohen's great posthumous book it is stated, quite casually, that Christ is in reality the Messiah of the Gentiles."

This idea was, at least to Rosenzweig, not his own contribution but Cohen's and those



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others' whose names he said he could have cited.

DORA EDINGER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With reference to Rabbi Bamberger's comments (January 1954) on Jacob Taubes's article, may I point out the following.

The very fact that the Cabala may not be of Jewish origin, and that many pious Jews believe in it, is proof that Judaism is tolerant of various philosophic speculations. Judaism insists, however, on the practice of the Commandments. These are codified in the Halachah. Judaism is a way of life and the Halachah shows the way. Rabbi Bamberger asks, "What Halachah?" Did he ever hear of the Shulchan Aruch? If he rejects the Shulchan Aruch, what does he offer as a substitute to make Judaism a way of life? The Halachah can very well be practiced in the Diaspora. Millions of Jews the world over practiced it for centuries and practice it today. It would seem that Rabbi Bamberger is slightly confused.

HARRY BRADLEY

New York City

## TV Ethics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I find Mr. Podhoretz's article "Our Changing Ideals, as Seen on TV" (December 1953) altogether extraordinary. Unless it is written with a subtlety of irony which is beyond me, the Olympian moral imperturbability of this young critic in the face of a monstrosity is something like a *tour de force*. I take a single instance: the little TV drama of the high school student, the chairman of the committee, who has a list of other students, all cheats, to submit to the Dean, and finding on it his sweetheart's name, debates with himself whether he should delete it. Mr. Podhoretz writes:

"His father, guessing the boy's trouble, persuades him to do so: 'You're going out into a tough world where nobody will care about you and your interests. You have to look out for yourself and the people you love.' " After a little more of this reported talk, Mr. Podhoretz continues: "At first the boy takes this advice, but later, to the consternation of his father, confesses while delivering his valedictory address, and proclaims his own expulsion."

Now comes Mr. Podhoretz's comment, in general keeping with his attitude toward TV drama problems throughout the article: "Though repudiated, the father in this play is not unsympathetically portrayed. He *realizes* that the Honor System places too great a burden on young people, and that there is something absurd—something that violates common sense—in allowing a *trivial* matter to ruin a life" (my italics). Mr. Podhoretz does not say the father is "of the opinion that etc." The father "realizes. . . ." And what is the trivial matter? Not that the young man will shield his sweetheart, thinking that her "crime" is a forgivable misdemeanor; *but that he will do so while permitting others to be expelled by handing in the remainder of the list.*

"The father in this play is not unsympathetically portrayed," writes Mr. Podhoretz. And the attitude this implies is not unsympathetically reported by Mr. Podhoretz. A piece of outrageous and heartless villainy is proposed by a "decent" father to a young son, and we have no comment on the ghastly corruption of public taste and morals which the sympathetic portrayal, and its sympathetic acceptance, imply. Mr. Podhoretz writes, a little further on: "Yet, curiously enough, the most salient feature of this ethos remains its sadness." (Does it, by God? I should have thought that "repulsiveness" comes a little nearer.) "It presents itself as making a modest demand on life, a demand so modest that life would be guilty of the cruelest perversity to deny it. Bearing in its countenance the lines and wrinkles of maturity, it is always opposed to the presumptuous, enthusiastic 'idealism' of youth." I suggest again that the wrong word has been used: I would substitute for "maturity" premature moral senility.

MAURICE SAMUEL

New York City

[Mr. Podhoretz entered the army at about the time when Mr. Samuel's letter was received, and the exhaustive schedule of basic training has not left him time to write a reply.—ED.]

## Vergil and "Yahrzeit"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. M. Hadas's interesting article on "Vergil, Hebrew Prophecy, and the Roman Ideal" (November 1953) brings to my mind these lines from the *Aeneid* (V. 46-54): "The circle of a year is now complete with all its months, since we have committed to the earth the last remains of my sacred father. And now the day, if I mistake not, is at hand, the day which I shall always keep as a day of sorrow and observance always to be honored. Were I to spend the day as an outcast on the African shores, or should I find myself far out upon the Grecian Sea, or in the city of Mycene, still I would duly observe my annual duties."

The words were spoken by Aeneas, asking

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his comrades to commemorate with him the death of his father Anchises. Few passages more movingly describe the feeling of children keeping *Yahrzeit* in honor of their departed parents. Did Vergil know of *Yahrzeit*?

H. ABT

Johannesburg, South Africa

## A License to Doubt

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am grateful to you for your discernment and courage in publishing Robert E. Fitch's "The Illusions of the Intelligentsia" in your December 1953 issue, and, of course, to Dr. Fitch for his singular honesty and hardihood.

I wonder, now that it has been said in clear black-on-white by a licensed intellectual in an intellectually respectable organ of opinion, whether the "liberal line" may now be questioned by us ordinary folk; whether it would be possible to confer special dispensation upon such unlicensed, upstart dabblers in opinion as may long to dissent from or question the hard "liberal line" on such presumably closed subjects as the Satanic Evil of the Taft-Hartley law, the menace of "McCarthyism," or the sacredness of Adlai Stevenson's speeches?

Should not the penalty for such doubts or even dissents be somewhat less than excommunication? Does one really have a duty to one's neighbors or social class to believe on blind faith or blinder terror that Senator McCarthy aspires to be another Hitler, despite his obvious gestures to reassure Jewish opinion by appointing Jews to conspicuous positions on his staff? Is one really obligated, in debt to one's humanity, to blow up McCarthy's cynicism to mountainous proportions when considering his defense of his $10,000 Lustron royalty, while never questioning the ethics of people on the "good side" who enjoyed tremendously larger sums for special services in fields relating to their official duties, including foreign affairs? Is it the final, unforgivable offense to suggest that the inflation of "McCarthyism" into a national and world issue is due, in some measure, to the planned exploitation by the organized Communists of the hate-potentiality latent in his position as an Irish Catholic in a predominantly non-Catholic country?

Does one dare to keep his mind free of a special, predetermining "line," or is it necessary to appeal to Dr. Fitch and COMMENTARY to devise a special license, entitling the duly certified bearer to doubt that the "liberal line" is the new Revelation? If such license were procurable, I should very much like to possess one, and to obtain one for my children in school to show to their so stoutly liberal teachers.

During the campaign of 1952 I polled a group of twenty "intellectual" acquaintances at social gatherings and found not one declaring for Eisenhower; in a private postcard poll of assured secrecy, eight votes were recorded for Eisenhower and three as uncertain. Now that COMMENTARY has enabled Dr. Fitch to speak out, may we persuade the secret underground indicated by the eight Eisenhower votes and the three uncertains that it is again reasonably safe to think one's own thoughts. . . ?

PHILIP HOCHSTEIN

Newark, New Jersey

## Pepys and Jewish Decorum

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your August 1953 issue contains a review by Jacob Sloan ("The Beard Is Not the Jew") in which it is parenthetically stated: "Thus an outsider like Pepys, visiting a 17th-century synagogue in England, marveled to observe the lack of decorum during the religious services. He described the worshipers as talking and moving about freely—just as they do nowadays in all but the High, Gentile-like synagogues."

In *The Jew in English Literature* by Albert F. Modder, the author credits Dr. Solomon Grayzel, the editor of the Jewish Publication Society of America, with the acute observation that Samuel Pepys happened to visit the synagogue when the Simchat Torah service was in progress. This is the one service during the year when informality is the order of the day and solemn decorum is abandoned for the celebration that accompanies reading the final words of the Old Testament and beginning Genesis once again. It is too bad that the great diarist did not visit the synagogue on any other occasion when worshipping took place. . . .

Mr. Sloan's view that "anyone at all familiar with the Jews recognizes a definite strain of individualism in our group that crops up time and again, in the unlikeliest of places" might have been supported by a different example.

BERNARD J. MEISLIN

New York City

## Correction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In rereading Mr. Justice Frankfurter's opinion in *Knauff v. Shaughnessy*, I notice to my chagrin that the reference to this case in my review of Milton Konvitz's book (January 1954) carries the wrong page number. The correct citation should be: *Knauff v. Shaughnessy* (338 U.S. 537 [1950]).

HERBERT B. EHRMANN

Boston, Massachusetts

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# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## Anti-Zionism as Ideology

WHAT PRICE ISRAEL? By ALFRED M. LILIENTHAL. Regnery. 274 pp. $3.95.

*Reviewed by* MILTON HIMMELFARB

IDEOLOGY is thought that has suffered hardening of the arteries. It is what happens when the terrible simplifiers that Burckhardt warned us about get hold of a tradition and squeeze it into a closed system. The anti-Zionist tradition of classical Reform Judaism in America was represented by such thoughtful men as I. M. Wise, Kaufmann Kohler, and Samuel Goldenson. *What Price Israel?* is that tradition shrunk and distorted into an ideology.

When those men spoke about Jewish history or religion their interpretation or their emphasis could be disputed, but not their knowledge. In this book boner follows boner, page after page; the learning of the tradition has been succeeded by the pretentious ignorance of the ideologue. What would the *Protest-Rabbiner,* in this or any other country, have said about a statement that the Jews of the Book of Esther were "Judaist Persians"? For that matter, what would they have said about a book on contemporary political affairs which confuses Ernest Bevin and Aneurin Bevan?

It is characteristic of the ideologue that he has a low opinion of the intelligence of the ordinary run of men. That is why the author could allow himself to list Iran as an Arab country, immediately after telling us that "the Arab Land contains between 50 and 55% of the estimated crude oil reserve of the world." He must know that Iran is not an Arab country, a grade-school student knows that. He makes it an Arab country to enhance the importance of "Arab oil" and to lay the blame for the West's trouble in Iran at Israel's door, expecting that his sleight-of-hand will not be noticed. Ideological tendentiousness leads him to omit any suggestion that part of the responsibility for the wretched situation of the Arab refugees belongs to the Arab governments. British scholars and churchmen who have long favored the Arab cause have condemned the Arab governments for cynically exploiting the plight of the refugees. We must assume that the author knows about this exploitation too, that he does not mention it because it would weaken his case against Israel and her American friends, and that he thinks of his readers as being too dull or uninformed to spot the omission. The same sort of thing can be said about his account of the recent history of the Jews in Iraq.

FOR your true ideologue, ends always justify means. Among the means used in this book is calumny. The author accuses a deceased high official of the United States government of a very grave offense, and gives no evidence for the accusation. He mentions Hitler and Weizmann in the same breath as racists. He describes a dissenting ambassador as "burying Count Bernadotte even before the UN mediator was killed by Zionist terrorists." He insinuates, despite Menahem Begin's denial, that the commander of the Irgun Tsevai Leumi was a Soviet agent. (If anything, Begin is a reactionary chauvinist.) Such an insinuation is calculated to suggest that the establishment of Israel was a Soviet plot, as is the application of the terms "front" and "fellow-traveler" to Israel's friends.

The paragraph immediately following, with its hints of mysteries, secrets, conspiracies, disloyalties, and all manner of sinister doings, is typical. "This book has been written, against the concerned counsel of many who are close and dear to me, because I feel I owe a duty to my country above any duty I owe my friends. The question 'What is a Jew?' is now intimately tied to the more important question 'How can we hold the Middle East?' My determination to complete this book was strengthened by the knowledge that no American Christian could, nor any Jew would, write it. Some of my material has been the subject of whispers, and I



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decided it was time that muted talk be brought to the surface and be debated."

The author's excursus on the Khazars deserves special mention. He likes the theory—if it can be dignified with such a name—that European (and consequently American) Jews are mostly descended from this vanished Turkic people, whose rulers were converted to Judaism more than a thousand years ago. This notion has been advanced by the Arab League as a rebuttal of the Zionist argument that the Jews have a historical right to Palestine. In the United States the Khazars are a staple, not of anti-Zionist, but of downright anti-Semitic propaganda.

REALITY is the great enemy of ideology's Truth. Consequently ideology must abolish reality by ignoring it or denying it or standing it on its head. Jewish Palestine has been a major answer to the needs of persecuted Jews in the last twenty years. A man like Rabbi Irving F. Reichert, who may be said to represent the authentic tradition of anti-Zionism, concedes this reality and is grateful that persecuted Jews were able to find a home in Israel. (This does not prevent him from continuing to regard the Zionist program and philosophy as retrograde and cautioning against a too great emphasis on Israel in the thinking and activity of American Jews.) The author of this book does not concede the reality; he evades or denies it.

The anti-Zionist tradition, because it based itself on universal humanitarianism, wanted for the Arabs the human rights it wanted for all men. Anti-Zionist ideology, on the other hand, sympathizes with the Arabs only as they are opponents of Israel and Zionism. The author of this book, who has much to say about the injustices that Arabs have suffered in the struggle over Palestine, is otherwise quite unmoved by Arab needs or aspirations. He blames the United States for being anti-Arab on the Israel issue, but he does not blame us for being anti-Arab on the Tunisian issue. For North Africa he is interested only in an "amicable compromise"; his sole complaint is that our friendship for Israel makes us unacceptable as "a conciliator." The Neo-Destour movement (one of the few really promising movements in the Arab world) protests not against America's friendship for Israel, but against our approval of colonialism where it has the least excuse for being.

It loses us Arab support in the Middle East, the author writes, when Americans draw "sweeping . . . analogies between recent Soviet policies [the Prague trials and the accusations against the Moscow doctors] and the anti-Semitism of Hitler," because "nothing could please the Soviet Government more" in its attempts to win the Arabs over than to be called anti-Semitic by America. To reason that our frustration of justified Arab demands in North Africa does not hurt us in the Middle East, but that our condemnation of Soviet anti-Semitism does—this is the crazy logic of ideology. So is the denunciation of the successful Jewish effort to obtain restitution and indemnification from Western Germany. In the author's eyes this is racism; the German state is the rightful heir of the Jews it murdered.

He laments the damage that he thinks Zionism and sympathy for Israel have done to Judaism. But what's Judaism to him, or he to Judaism? He likes Toynbee's characterization of Zionism as "a fragment of a fossil," the fossil being Judaism. Contemplating "the history of Judaism—an experience in which the religious substance and the nationalist shadow blend most confusingly," he finds that "in historic reality, Judaism has shrunk to a nationalist rite" and that "the 'chosen people' concept smothered universality." We conclude that he is at his most consistent when he approves Koestler's definition of the Jewish alternative (though he blurs Koestler's second term): go to Israel, or stay where you are and stop being Jews. It is not hard to imagine what a Kohler would have said about all this.

NOWHERE does this book show its astigmatism more than in its notion of America and Americanism. American Jews are warned not to have "a foreign policy separate from that of Methodists or Episcopalians. The country cannot afford such a dichotomy." But Americans know that Methodists and Episcopalians do have separate "foreign policies" in this sense, just as the Lutherans and Catholics have. In the great debate between interventionists and isolationists before Pearl Harbor, most Episcopalians were on the interventionists' side and most Lutherans on the other side. Methodists and Catholics have rather different foreign policies on the issue of posting a United States ambassador to the Vatican. When Catholic diocesan newspapers print on their front pages the text of the agreement between the United States and

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Franco for bases in Spain, that is one indication of a Catholic preference in United States foreign policy. Episcopalians are as characteristically Anglophile as Irish Catholics are Anglophobe. The predilection of most American Jews for Israel is very much the same kind of thing, and so is the mistrust of most American Jews for Germany. There is nothing wrong, much less sinister, about it. So far from being un-American, it is very American. The author underrates American respect for diversity.

One reads the book, puts it down, and wonders. Surely it is possible to be critical of Israel's handling of the Arab problem, and to oppose Zionism as a doctrine and a movement, without backing into this dead-end, in this dubious neighborhood.

## Hunting Groundhogs

THE MARMOT DRIVE. By JOHN HERSEY. KNOPF. 273 pp. $3.50.

*Reviewed by* WILLIAM S. POSTER

MR. HERSEY'S latest work offers a marked and somewhat baffling contrast to his previous output. In such works as *A Bell for Adano, The Wall,* or even *Hiroshima,* Mr. Hersey moved carefully about on the neatly outlined beachheads of big political issues and humanitarian sentiments and brought forth some well-constructed, skillfully executed, and pleasing books even if they were, essentially, journalistic mirages—structures of fact, ideology, and sentiment with no real location in the painful and complex world of actual human experience. *The Marmot Drive* is an amorphous and confused production, one that will probably not attract the large audience of the previous works or give anyone the impression that an act of ennobling humanitarian piety has been performed merely by reading it. Yet, in terms of literature, it is easily the most interesting of Mr. Hersey's books, the only one, as far as I know, that makes an effort to say something new and something real.

*The Marmot Drive* deals with the affairs of "Tunxis," a small, out-of-the-way community in Connecticut. Mr. Hersey makes much of its strange juxtapositions of centuries and customs, the fact that television sets and candlesticks are used in the same house, gasoline stations and whipping posts exist side by side, and the very same conversation contains the latest neologisms and such quaint survivals as "raise high tantrabogus," "betwattled after," "I swan," and just about every rural expression you ever heard except "by cracky." The odor of rural New England is also exuded, somewhat over-thickly, from a mass of names such as Eben Avered, Pliny Forward, Dorcas Thrall, Roswell Coit, Mrs. Dearthick, Anak Welch, Romeo Bacon, a "girl from the city named Hester." But, then, to some degree, Mr. Hersey's intentions are patently allegorical and some of the names decipher easily enough: Pliny Forward is the learned and progressive young man of the town, Roswell Coit is a lascivious lout, Dorcas Thrall a patient spinster, Mrs. Dearthick a believer in poverty, Anak Welch goes back on his commitment, and Hester is Hawthorne's Scarlet Lady happily revived to give us some telling insights into a host of rotting, inadequate, or bewildered males through their relation to her free-floating sexuality. The exact significance, if any, of the name of her fiancé, Eben Avered, escapes me and perhaps some of the allegory along with it.

It is with Eben that Hester arrives in Tunxis to meet his father, Matthew, the Selectman of the small town which has been left behind by the modern world and the center of its conflicting passions, fantasies, ambitions, and resentments. Selectman Avered is busy marshaling the townsfolk for a drive against a teeming colony of woodchucks, groundhogs, or marmots that have become audacious and threaten, at least in the heated imagination of the Selectman, to infiltrate the town and dispossess its inhabitants. Anak Welch, six and a half feet of philosophic farmer, sums up the necessity for the drive in a manner that lets us in on the larger import of this eruption of anxiety:

"D'you know the way sweet honeysuckle gets on a tree that lets itself get weak and overwhelms it and kills it by-and-by? That's what's beginning in my opinion with the woodchucks. They calculate that Tunxis is on the wane, that's the way I see it, and they're movin' in on us, they'd be glad to nudge us out altogether.

"We humans think we're pretty high-soarin' with our combustion engines and electric radios and now jimmyin' open the almighty secret itself, splittin' God to make explosions, but what we forget is that we're still part of the woodlot where it grows rank and

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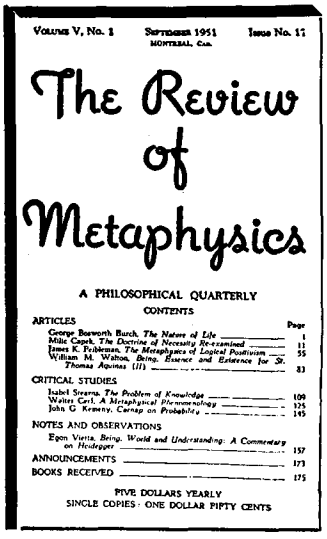
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wild. . . . We can't afford to get absent-minded and forget that."

One way or another, the rancorous, selfish, and unimaginative citizenry are herded into a hunt which turns out to be largely unsuccessful except insofar as it gives Hester a chance to learn even more than she already knows about her divided heart and libido. She wonders about her feelings for Eben, allows Coit to make brief, incomplete love to her in the woods, and wishes fervently that Eben's father would show her similar attention. The wish turns out catastrophically for the elder Avered as the townspeople catch him removing a cinder from her eye, draw the wrong conclusion, and decide to give him an old-fashioned public whipping for the imaginary misdeed, and also for having actually committed adultery and been caught at it a long time ago, for being too smart and too impractical, for having led them on a wild marmot chase, and because they require a scapegoat for all their rancor, guilt, misgivings, and sins. Afterwards, the drive peters out with the Selectman all by himself clumsily slaughtering a few penned-up groundhogs while the crowd hoots at him.

Some kind of vital symbolic or allegorical probing of some of the deeper conflicts of American life is plainly possible here. Mr. Hersey's woodchucks and small-towners locked in combat do stir the imagination, truly if not powerfully. But nearly all of Mr. Hersey's training militates against the translation of whatever basic intuition is present into discriminated terms of human feeling or thought. The essential gods of Mr. Hersey's kind of novel, with its sources in Hemingway, the journalistic best-seller, the clean-cut, objective reporting of *Life* and the *New Yorker*, are those of technique, documentation, and observation, all of which tend to confuse and dissipate the creative energy necessary to a work of this kind. There is, for example, enough sheer "novelist's technique" thrown into *The Marmot Drive* to keep a TV studio going for a couple of years. The actual time of the book's action is two days, but cleverly contrived flashbacks, switchbacks, narrative reminiscence, segues, fade-ins, transitions, pan-shots, slow it up, thicken and enrich it till it moves like a tide of molasses photographed in slow motion.

Good and evil, the likeable and the hateful, the sad and the happy are all indistinguishable in the treacle and one has to guess how Mr. Hersey feels about his characters and events as well as how the reader is supposed to feel. The documentation of dialect phrases, customs, and plants is likewise probably scientifically right down to the last "persnickety" and "volunteer hemlock," but whether it serves any real purpose is open to question.

Mr. Hersey's powers of observation cannot, however, be written off quite so easily, much as one would like to. David Hume once pointed out, in a different context, that the observation of two events in sequence, even if repeated innumerable times, could never demonstrate a logical connection. A whole vast school of modern fiction is dedicated to the contrary proposition, to the notion, frequently expressed, that all you have to do is to keep your eyes and ears focused on people's faces and speech to learn nearly all that there is to be known about modern life, thus making the fiction writer a kind of shoplifter of reality who earns a living by returning his loot in a fresh package. Since my own powers of observation are relatively feeble, I am often impressed by writing of this brand until I recall that writers of this genre (and it includes some of our most prominent) have gone ahead for the last twenty years and cleanly missed nearly every significant development that has taken place inside the human psyche.

Mr. Hersey is, however, a special case, for here he is, catching up, in a somewhat confused and belated fashion, with some of the elements that have gone into the making of great and possibly tragic change in human nature and doing it precisely through his highly developed power of observation extended into perception and insight. For, here and there in *The Marmot Drive*, with a remarkable absence of the emotions that should attend them, with next to no causal understanding, set down briefly, flatly, and shorn of their connections, there are passages that project such significant factors of current change as the antagonism of city and small town, the oppositions of civilization and nature, men and their leaders, the common man and the intellectual, young and old, past and present, male and female. It is not that these oppositions have not always existed and been written about, but the peculiar rancidity, maniacal confusion, and discontinuity of their current condition, and the gravity of what such states signify and portend, have scarcely been noticed. Mr. Hersey notices and at some level of being apprehends the significance of

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what he observes. In any case, if only because of the delineation of the weird relations between the elder and younger Avered or Hester's sharp introspective run-down of her suitors and the evocation of some obscure contemporary shudder by the herd of creepy groundhogs, *The Marmot Drive* is probably as well worth reading as almost any current work of fiction.

## Sephardic Philosopher-Statesman

DON ISAAC ABRAVANEL — STATESMAN AND PHILOSOPHER. By B. NETANYAHU. Jewish Publication Society of America. 346 pp. $3.50.

*Reviewed by* JACOB B. AGUS

THIS book is an excellent biography of a great financier and commentator on the Law who was the most famous personality among the hapless Jews exiled from Spain in the year 1492. After tracing the background of the illustrious Abravanel family with the aid of an impressive array of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian documents, the author follows the changing fortunes of Don Isaac through the royal courts of Portugal, Spain, and Naples. In the course of serving these sovereigns he amassed fortunes and lost them, rose to prominence and leadership by his talent and wisdom, only to fall to the depths of privation as a potentate's smile changed into a frown; Abravanel learned at first hand the fatal weaknesses of absolute monarchy. In the Republic of Venice, he saw and admired the first stirrings of democracy in Europe.

Mr. Netanyahu's style is very readable, even racy at times, and his scholarship is wide-ranging. Though most of this volume was originally a doctoral dissertation submitted to Dropsie College, it shows hardly any trace of academic ponderousness. His mastery of the greater part of the historical context in which Don Isaac's personality must be seen is impressive. Only on rare occasions does he slip. But these few slips betray the prevailing prejudices of our day, especially among Israeli scholars.

SO INSISTENT is the author on seeing his hero against the background of the world political and cultural events of his day that he fails to see Abravanel within the context of his own tradition. Did Abravanel have to be influenced by Savonarola, the mystical visionary and political reformer of Florence, in order to see the "feet of the Messiah" in the disasters of his day? Did he not follow good Jewish precedent and a Talmudic injunction (Sanhedrin 98a) in this interpretation? Mr. Netanyahu's strained efforts to find parallels between the thought and personal qualities of Abravanel and Savonarola are unconvincing.

Abravanel was not at all a "mystic," in the psychological sense of this term. The author betrays a lack of comprehension of the Jewish mentality when he argues that belief, in those days, in the imminent advent of the Messiah required an unworldly personality. The entire existence of the Jewish people was at that time predicated on this hope.

Only someone who under the influence of contemporary events persists in misinterpreting the Messianic hope can possibly write as follows: "A man happy in his family circle . . . is hardly the type for mystical speculation." Similarly, the author's criticism of Abravanel's failure to direct Jewish immigration toward Palestine fails to take account of the nature of Jewish life and hopes as they existed on the threshold of the 16th century. Don Joseph Nasi's abortive plan for the settlement of

*Studies in the Scope and Method of*

**THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY**

***Edited by* RICHARD CHRISTIE *and* MARIE JAHODA**

*The Authoritarian Personality* reported the findings of the largest research on anti-semitism undertaken by scientists, and was sponsored by The American Jewish Committee. Because of the importance of the method and the findings of this study, a group of distinguished scientists have collaborated in an effort to place the findings of this work within the larger framework of the social sciences. They indicate both the value and the shortcomings of the original research in the critical manner of science and scholarship. There are chapters by Harold D. Lasswell, Edward A. Shils, Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley, Richard Christie and Else Frenkel-Brunswik. A reading of SITSAMOTAP will repay anyone with an interest in anti-semitism or scientific method.

**Published February 1** **$4.50**

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**GLENCOE ILLINOIS**

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Tiberias was conceived as an act of piety, not as a means of "solving the Jewish problem." No Jewish thinker of the pre-Spinoza era, not excepting Maimonides, interpreted the Messianic hope as "a normal historical development."

The passages in which Maimonides describes the Messianic era as a state of universal justice and perfect well-being, "in which the world will follow its normal course, save that sovereignty will return to Israel," must be studied in the light of what Maimonides taught regarding the manner in which this sovereignty is to be exercised. For the Messiah is to prove his authenticity by "signs and miracles," which will confound and silence all the sovereigns of the earth, "killing by the word of his mouth" anyone who dares challenge his authority (Iggereth Taiman, pp. 100-102 [Goldman edition]; Code, "T'shuvah," IX 2, "M'lachim," XII).

THE author's opinion that Jewish writers before and during Abravanel's generation relegated the Messianic hope to the background seems to me unfounded. The fact that Cresquas and Albo did not rank belief in the Messiah as one of the "roots" of the faith is not to be construed as a denial of this principle. Cresquas calculated the "end"; Albo writes of the Messiah in detail (Ikkarim, IV, 42); and Isaac Erame, the elder contemporary of Abravanel, refers to the Messiah very frequently, though he stops short of specific description (see especially "Akedath Yitzchak," Gates 60, 29, 33).

Occasional failures to see Abravanel in the light of his own tradition are combined with an excessive zeal to pit him against the giants of the Renaissance, with whom he had no intellectual contact whatever. Abravanel's thinking paralleled that of Erame to the point where the latter's son accused the former of plagiarism. Yet in this book Erame is not even mentioned.

Mr. Netanyahu tells us that Abravanel's comment on the verse, "And God created man," is similar to Augustine's—but this is to show an insensitivity to the gulf that separated the Jewish from the Christian tradition in regard to the interpretation of man's creation and fall. He discovers the influence of Christian society in the requirement that the Synhedrion consist in large part of priests and Levites, failing to see in this the momentum of a Talmudic idea that called for the Synhedrion to be composed of "priests, Levites, and Israelites whose daughters are considered worthy to marry priests" (Sanhedrin 32a). He recognizes Abravanel's yearning for the retribution that the Messiah would exact as a natural response to the incredible tortures to which Jewish people were subjected in his time, but he fails to indicate how this hope was, in the early Middle Ages, still relatively free from the taint of vengeance. Thus Maimonides wrote, "Our Sages and Prophets yearned for the days of the Messiah not in order that they might rule the world or lord it over the nations or be exalted by them, but in order that they might devote themselves in leisure to the Torah and its wisdom" (Code, "M'lachim," XII, end).

The author draws attention to Etienne Gilson's classification of Christian medieval thought, but errs grievously in describing Saadia as the Jewish exponent of the Augustinian position, "I believe that I may understand." Saadia has been thoroughly studied in the past generation; he was as far removed as anyone could be from holding that faith had primacy over reason. Saadia believed that reason, unaided by faith, was quite capable of discovering truth; in any conflict between tradition and reason, he favored a reinterpreting of the text to bring it in accord with the demands of reason ("Emunoth V'Deoth," II,3).

Closer attention to the Jewish sources of Abravanel's views would have led the author to take account of the growth of Jewish self-government in the Middle Ages. The republican and democratic tendencies in Abravanel's commentaries, which the author attributes to the influence of Venice, were derived, at least in part, from the democratic practices prevailing within the Jewish Kehillahs.

In spite of this criticism, which applies almost exclusively to the second part of the book, the biography remains a detailed and colorful exposition of the life and thought of a great Jew.

## Tangible History

ISRAEL'S HISTORY IN COINS. By A. REIFENBERG. East and West Library. (Distributed by Farrar, Straus and Young.) 46 pp. $2.50.

*Reviewed by* STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

THE coins of ancient Judea are not particularly interesting or attractive, as ancient coins

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go. They cannot approach the high art of Greek coins from Elis or certain parts of Sicily, the fiercely realistic portraiture of early Roman imperial coins, even the barbaric stylization of Celtic and Scythian money. They are for the most part small bronze coins, rather poorly designed and crudely struck, and because of the religious taboo against graven images, their types are mainly confined to such inoffensive symbols as wreaths, cornucopiae, palm trees, anchors, and bunches of grapes, with a few more specifically ceremonial symbols like the seven-branched candlestick and the *lulab* and *ethrog*.

But here is a tiny bronze coin issued about 125 B.C.E. by a petty king we know as John Hyrcanus I, and it reads *Jehochanan Hakkohen Haggadol Vecheber Hajehudim*: "Jehochanan the High Priest and the Community of the Jews"—why, the heart leaps up at this!

Here is another small bronze inscribed *Lacheruth Jerushalem*, "For the Freedom of Jerusalem," struck during the Second Revolt in 132 C.E., and the "Shimun" on the obverse is the real name of Bar Kochba, otherwise lost to history. This odd-looking building with four fluted columns on a tetradrachm is the Temple itself, and those two dots in the central shrine are ancient Torahs.

One does not have to be particularly susceptible to the magnetic field of religion or tradition in order to feel the excitement here, to stir to the lump of metal as the living presence of a marvelous past. These coins are Witnesses in the most literal sense, and to hold one in the hand is to experience a sense of contemporaneity with history no written word can conjure up.

THERE is little of this emotion, or any emotion, in *Israel's History in Coins*, a tiny monograph written by an Israeli numismatist in Jerusalem, published in London by the East and West Library, printed in Holland, and distributed here by Farrar, Straus and Young. The seventeen pages of text and two of chronology offer a brief and useful history, and the forty-nine plates of enlarged photographs, almost all of them of coins from Mr. Reifenberg's own collection, constitute an impressive exhibit. One could wish that Mr. Reifenberg, who ties his subject to "the resurgence of Israel as a nation," had made more of the ambiguous implications of the revival of these ancient symbols on the modern coinage of Israel; one could wish that he did not keep calling coins "medals," or were not quite so certain that the Queen Salome of Plate 16 shows a face with "simple, severe lines, not at all reminiscent of those of a 'dancer.'"

Since the coins themselves are relatively scarce, expensive, and hard to get in good condition, however, most of us will have to rely on this little book for an experience of ancient Jewish history in this miraculously tangible form.

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## Philistine Leftism

DISSENT: A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION. New York City. Volume I, Winter 1954. $0.60.

*Reviewed by* NATHAN GLAZER

WHEN, about a year ago, one heard that a group of writers dissatisfied with the prevailing trends in American politics—Irving Howe, Lewis Coser, Travers Clement, Meyer Schapiro, Harold Orlans, and others were among them—were going to start a new magazine, it seemed a fine idea. The more magazines seriously concerned with politics, the better. And writers should not be deterred—as these felt they were—from saying just what they have to say because of the lack of sympathy with their views shown by the editors of the few serious journals around.

That was in the abstract. Now the first issue of *Dissent* is here; its editorial board consists of the five writers named above, plus Stanley Plastrik. The whole thing is an unmitigated disaster as far as what is left of socialist thought in this country is concerned. If

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# Vive La Différence!

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this is socialism* no further explanations are required for its failure to catch on in America. All we need do is point to the editorial statement with which the latest serious socialist journal begins its first issue:

"The purpose of this new magazine is suggested by its name; to dissent from the bleak atmosphere of conformism that pervades the political and intellectual life of the United States; to dissent from the support of the status quo now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists; to dissent from the terrible assumption that a new war is necessary or inevitable, and that the only way to defeat Stalinism is through atomic world suicide."

If the reader now looks forward, despite this unpromising beginning, to some documentation of how "the bleak atmosphere of conformism" is spreading in the United States, he will find precious little offered him in the remaining 111 pages of *Dissent*. A few pages on, he will learn from editor Irving Howe that "the *Nation* provides more necessary information about violations of civil liberties than any comparable American journal." Now Howe asserts that the *Nation* uses this information "to further the disastrous position of quasi-appeasement of Stalinism," as he puts it. But it has quite escaped Howe—as it has not escaped many actively concerned with civil liberties problems—that the *Nation's* "information" on civil liberties violations will often turn out, on close examination, to be misinformation. In one case, as I happen to know, the "victim" was not a "liberal" but a party-liner, and he nevertheless lost his job not because of his political views but for administrative reasons; such misreporting is not infrequent in the *Nation*. Responsible standards of fact and authenticity, which are generally quite beyond the *Nation*, seem matters of equal indifference to the editors of *Dissent*.

WE MIGHT look forward, too, to a discussion of those who believe a new war is "necessary or inevitable"; unfortunately, the editors did not consider the subject newsworthy this first issue. We might also look forward, if we are interested in morbid details, to the analysis of those—one must suppose them inmates of in-

*The editors actually represent the left wing of socialism, and many persons who consider themselves socialists could properly disassociate themselves from *Dissent*, and take very much the same attitude to it that I do.

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# This *I Believe*

**By Tocqueville***

"MORALISTS are constantly complaining that the ruling vice of the present time is pride. This is true in one sense, for indeed everybody thinks that he is better than his neighbor or refuses to obey his superior; but it is extremely false in another, for the same man who cannot endure subordination or equality has so contemptible an opinion of himself that he thinks he is born only to indulge in vulgar pleasures. He willingly takes up with low desires without daring to embark on lofty enterprises, of which he scarcely dreams.

"Thus, far from thinking that humility ought to be preached to our contemporaries, I would have endeavors made to give them a more enlarged idea of themselves and of their kind. Humility is unwholesome to them; what they most want is, in my opinion, pride."

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*DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA (1835-40)

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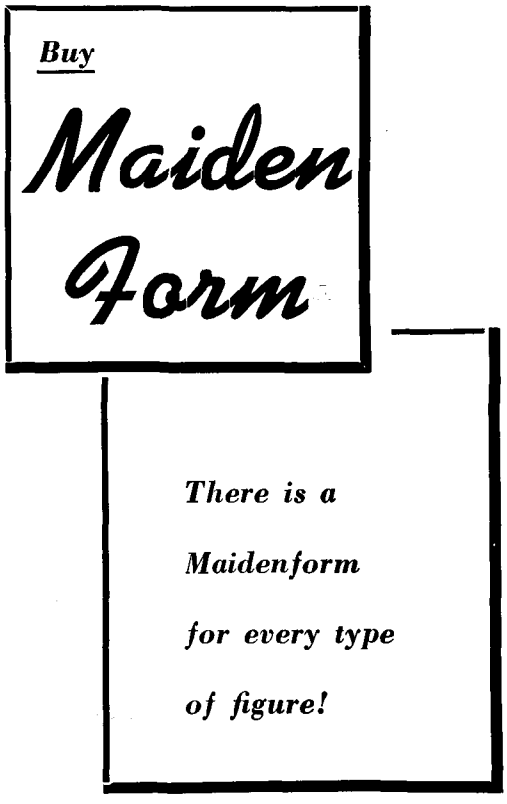


sane asylums—who favor "world atomic suicide" as the way to defeat Stalinism; but having tossed off this teaser, the editors felt it unnecessary to say more.

*Dissent* takes the well-known, historic position of socialism on war: it does not ask whether war is ever necessary or unnecessary, avoidable or unavoidable—it's simply against it, and assumes that the fact of war is decisive proof of the immorality of "capitalism."

Since *Dissent* is so uncommunicative on the question of American foreign policy—aside from being against it—I hope I will be forgiven if I quote from a personal conversation with one of the editors to fill out its position. This conversation took place about a year after the beginning of the Korean war. There was, of course, no debate over its origins: the editors of *Dissent* are anti-Communists of long standing. However, my friend was "against" the war. I asked: what would you have done? Don't ask me, he said, do I run the government? I persisted: but suppose you did run the government? I would never have got into that situation in the first place, he answered, so I am not responsible for proposing any policy today—it is enough for me to denounce it.

If we had conducted our conversation a few years earlier, he would presumably have also rejected the need to do anything about Hitler, because he wasn't responsible for that situation either. Perhaps, had he been allowed to run the United States from, say, 1929 on, he would have been happy to suggest a policy for Korea in 1950.

One is reminded of George Orwell's remark that if the radical intellectuals in England had had their way in the 20's and 30's, the Gestapo would have been walking the streets of London in 1940. Certainly, if the American "independent radicals" editing *Dissent* had had their way in the last ten years, the NKVD would be comfortably established today in Rome, Paris, and London—at least. Indeed, from one of the few specific references to current foreign policy—in which editor Lewis Coser attacks American policy in Indo-China as "imperialism"—it would seem that one of the "immediate demands" of *Dissent* is that we hasten to permit the NKVD to set up its quarters in Saigon and Hanoi.

It is no wonder that the editors of *Dissent* feel that one of their first obligations is to clarify. Editor Coser's contribution to an elucidation of the term "imperialism" is doubtless considered an important step in this direction. Coser points out that Hilferding and Lenin said that an imperialist power exports capital; *ergo*, if America gives money to its allies to strengthen them against the common enemy, that is imperialism. And so (if we were to continue editor Coser's clarification a bit further), if England gave subsidies to its Continental allies in the war against Napoleon, that, too, was imperialism. Coser's next contribution should be to explain, in view of the rather widespread character of this phenomenon as he understands it, why we had to wait until 1900 before anyone bothered to write about it.

But we must regard as a more central contribution to the process of clarification the carefully constructed sentences on socialism in the editorial statement: "We are united in the affirmation of a positive belief—the belief in socialism. . . . [By this we mean] the ethos and faith in humanity that for some 100 years have made men 'socialists.' We share a belief in the dignity of the individual, we share a refusal to countenance one man's gain at the expense of his brother, and we share an intel-

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lectual conviction that man can substantially control his condition if he understands and wills to."

Well, if we now try to find wherein this position of *Dissent* is distinguished from that of the late Senator Taft, Senator Humphrey, President Eisenhower, and Fulton J. Sheen, we come down to the refusal to "countenance one man's gain at the expense of his brother." Doctrinally, this poor cousin of the labor theory of value seems to be all that is left of socialism. But even this little snippet of doctrine remains unexplicated. Do the writers of *Dissent*, when they write for profit-making magazines or publishers — as some do — share in "gain at the expense of their brothers"? Do the academic members of the board of *Dissent*—of whom there are more than one—drawing their salaries from the gifts of businessmen and the dividends on investments share in "gain at the expense of their brothers"? All this is discreetly left for future issues.

BUT in one respect *Dissent* shares fully in the socialist heritage whose doctrine has disappeared from its pages: it carries on the unpleasant tradition of vituperative intemperance begun by Marx and continued by almost every Marxist worth his salt. Lenin was perhaps the only one to equal the old master, but even Rosa Luxemburg—as we see in a letter published in this issue—did not hang back when it came to defaming and besmirching the motives and characters of her political opponents. As every student of Marxism knows, the greatest violence is reserved for renegades and those politically closest to you. The editors of *Dissent* follow proudly in that tradition, in one place speaking of the writer of an article as "a young man on the make," and throughout implying—purely as a matter of course—that the former radicals and socialists they regularly denounce have "sold out." The editors share fully Marx's prejudices, polemical habits, and obsession with a ritual scapegoat, if they do not follow his lead in furiously pursuing facts to support his ideas. Marx had his "nigger Jew Lassalle," Lenin his "Kautskys and their ilk," and the editors of *Dissent* have their "Sidney Hooks and other writers for COMMENTARY."

The fury of their attack quite blinds them, and their logic is most defective when "former radicals" are in question. As we will recall, in the first paragraph quoted above the editors dissented "from the support of the status quo

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now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists." The rather more intense support of the status quo by the other 159,900,000 Americans has completely missed their attention. On the same page, we may read further: "Our magazine will be open to a wide arc of opinion, excluding only Stalinists and totalitarian fellow-travellers on the one hand, and those former radicals who have signed their peace with society as it is, on the other." Perhaps no more remarkable spectrum has been conceived of since *Mein Kampf*. One wonders what the editors plan to do about the Royalists, aristocrats, anti-Semites, and other non-signers of peace with society who decide to take advantage of this implicit invitation. What about those who have always been at peace with society, and therefore find it unnecessary to sign any peace pact? The statement seems ambiguous about them. One remembers also that Senator McCarthy likes neither the present farm policy nor the present security policy of this—or any other—government. Is he for the status quo? Then of course there are all those former radicals who have signed a general peace, but reserved their position in certain matters, such as the segregated schools of the South. Have the editors thought about them?

OF COURSE, life is always variable, and there are selections in *Dissent* that escape the general blight: the two little pieces of Harold Orlans, the memoir of Orwell by George Woodcock, the note on atrocities by Helen Mears. If one adds C. Wright Mills's essay on why there is no conservative ideology in America, one has paid one's respects to all the thinking of any consequence in the magazine.

It is clear that the establishment of a journalistic center where all independent radicals might have their untrammelled say is going to add nothing to American intellectual life. Indeed, considering the object-lesson that is *Dissent*, it would appear that its writers have in the past profited by the discipline of publishing in magazines that disagree with what they have to say—such pushing against opposition

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forces you to moderate your claims, strengthen your arguments, and be as concrete as possible. *Dissent* represents what happens when all the oppressive wraps are off. Almost simultaneously with the appearance of this first issue, Irving Howe published a long article on "This Age of Conformity" in *Partisan Review*. All the left-philistine traits we have pointed to in *Dissent* are there—the reduction of socialism to a mere attitude, the disappearance of positive ideas, the complete failure to suggest any alternatives to the policies of which one disapproves, the perpetual vulgar ascription of material motives to explain intellectual positions. But how these faults are writ larger in *Dissent!*

In *Dissent*, as we have said, all the wraps are off. One could not have guessed beforehand how little was left underneath.

## Piety and Morals

ISRAEL SALANTER—RELIGIOUS-ETHICAL THINKER. By MENAHEM G. GLENN. Bloch. 219 pp. $4.00.

*Reviewed by* MICHAEL WYSCHOGROD

IT WAS the evening of *Kol Nidre* and it was getting late. The services should have begun. But there was something amiss. Though the whole congregation was assembled and ready, the Rabbi was not. He was nowhere to be found. Where could he be? When the *Ma'ariv* services were nearly finished, he slunk into the synagogue, his clothes wrinkled, his hair dishevelled, strewn with feathers. "What happened, Rabbi?" "Nothing," was the answer. "On my way to the synagogue I heard a baby crying. Its mother had gone to services on this holy night of *Kol Nidre* and it was left alone. I stayed by the cradle and rocked it until its mother returned."

The chances are more than even that someone who had not heard this story but had read some of Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim* would not hesitate to ascribe it to that work. But this story is told by Dr. Glenn about Rabbi Israel Salanter, hero of his informative study and founder of the Musar movement among Lithuanian Jewry. Now Lithuanian Jewry is not generally renowned for this kind of thing. As the group most staunchly opposed to the emotional emphasis of Hasidism, Lithuanian Jewry is better known for its cold rationalism, its concern with the intricacies of Talmudic learning, and the "legalism" such concern engenders. But this view is at best an oversimplification; there is no better way to begin to show this than by a study of the Musar movement.

As Dr. Glenn points out, *musar* is a difficult word to translate. Perhaps the closest equivalent is the English word "ethics." But this fails to convey the sense of religious exhortation which the word acquired in the usage of Rabbi Israel. To him, the word came to stand for the whole spirit of religious humility implicit in Rabbinic literature and too often overlooked in the scholarly circles of 19th-century Lithuania. He came to feel that study of the Torah as an intellectual discipline divorced from the daily application of its moral values was an empty endeavor. And especially did he apply this to the realm "between man and man." For instance, when a cholera epidemic broke out in Kovno, taking a heavier toll of the poor than of the rich, the president of the congregation, Rabbi Asher Ginzberg, refused to permit the utilization of the Great Synagogue as a hospital, believing this to be a desecration of the House of God. Rabbi Israel then delivered one of his great Musar sermons in which he said: "Reb Asher, you should know that God, Blessed be His Name, is more concerned about the state of health of Hayyim the tanner than about your prayers and studies." This was Rabbi Israel's interpretation of the Torah.

The Musar interpretation of Judaism was a fascinating combination of concern with individual ethical character on the one hand, and with social problems on the other. Essentially, Musar is a method of self-improvement. Its aim is the acquisition of *middot tovot*—good ethical characteristics. Patience, diligence, humility, gentleness, are some of these. But Rabbi Israel realized that the moral task set by Judaism was for all the people, learned and unlearned alike, and he therefore saw Musar as bridging the gap that constantly threatens to open in Rabbinic Judaism between the scholars and the mass of Jews. In the Chevrah Musar, the society for the study of Musar, scholar rubbed shoulder with laborer, poor with rich—all united in the common ethical purpose.

DR. GLENN describes Rabbi Israel's activities in exhaustive detail. Born in 1810 in Lithuania, the son of a rabbi, he spent most of the seventy-three years of his life in the pursuit of his idea.

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Wherever he went—be it as headmaster of the Great Yeshiva in Vilna, or in his modest lodgings at Koenigsberg where Jewish students at the university would gather to hear the "Russian philosopher"—he organized groups for the study of Musar and its classics, the *Hovot Halevavot* of Bachya ibn Pekuda, and the *Mesillat Yesharim* of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. These groups took root and have survived to this day. Anyone who has attended the Lithuanian *yeshivot,* or indeed the American ones, can testify to the place Musar has had in the shaping of his view of Judaism. Whenever there was a tendency to lose sight of the forest for the trees, Musar was there to call renewed attention to the religious and ethical elements that are always there.

It is true, as Dr. Glenn points out, that there is something somber about Musar. The fear of heaven is there and no attempt is made to sugar-coat it. It is not the religion of "peace of mind." Rabbi Israel had very little of that: he suffered from a melancholy reminiscent of another religious thinker, Sören Kierkegaard. Musar is not for those who seek the *joy of life.* But those who see in the fear of divine punishment something expressive of our predicament will discover something cogent in the life and teachings of Rabbi Israel Salanter. Dr. Glenn's study provides the materials for this discovery.

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BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

MILTON HIMMELFARB, a member of the staff of the American Jewish Committee, has written for COMMENTARY on Jewish scholarship, history, religion, and communal affairs.

WILLIAM S. POSTER has published poetry, fiction, and criticism in the New York *Times,* the New York *Herald Tribune, Partisan Review,* and various other periodicals.

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MICHAEL WYSCHOGROD teaches philosophy at the City College of New York. His book on Kierkegaard and Heidegger will be published in the spring.

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